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The Metropolitan Life Survey Of

FORMER TEACHERS IN AMERICA

Conducted for
Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
by
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FORMER TEACHERS IN AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

This *Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers in America* is a companion study to the *Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 1985*. The latter study, the second in an annual series, reported what classroom teachers across the nation think is necessary to strengthen the teaching profession and to attract and retain good teachers.

Once again, Metropolitan Life and Louis Harris and Associates have broken new ground. *Former Teachers in America* is the first national study of teacher attrition to be based on talking with the people actually involved. The survey includes interviews with a national sample of former teachers who left public schools within the last five years to work in some other occupation. Their attitudes about teaching, their experience in changing careers, and their views of improvements that are needed add new perspective and insight to our understanding of the teaching profession in America today.

In this report:

- Former teachers say what they believe is necessary to strengthen the teaching profession in order to attract and retain quality people.
- Former teachers relate their major disappointments in teaching and explain their chief reasons for leaving the profession.
- Former teachers say how their new occupation stacks up on key job criteria when they compare it to teaching.
- Former teachers report what their career change has meant for them personally in terms of salary, change in job stress, and degree of job satisfaction.
- Analysis of former teachers' responses reveals the telltale signs of those teachers who may be next out the door unless something is done.
- Former teachers discuss whether they are likely to return to the classroom or not, and what it would take to induce them to come back.

This is a critical time in American education. Low salaries, poor working conditions, lack of occupational prestige, and a limited voice in school decisions have taken a toll on the teaching profession. The retention rate of current teachers seems too low and the production rate of new teacher graduates seems insufficient to avoid teacher shortages in the years to come. The National Institute of Education in its report, *The Condition of Education, 1984*, estimated that by 1992 this country will have 54% fewer new teacher graduates than are needed to fill the demand for additional teachers. The major strategies open to policymakers will include finding and enacting policies to: (a) retain current teachers at a higher rate, (b) attract greater numbers of college students into the profession, and (c) draw on the reserve labor force of certified and experienced former teachers. That reserve labor pool is represented by the recent former teachers in this survey, by former teachers who left for a new occupation more than five years ago, and by former teachers who are temporarily out of the labor force for various reasons.

Which strategy will prove most effective and efficient? It is difficult to predict how much each group will alter its future behavior in response to various inducements. On grounds of efficiency alone, one could argue that if we want to retain our current teachers, it will be easier and more economical to do so before they leave rather than after they have left for new careers. But, in fact, many of the policy changes that policymakers will be considering will have a positive effect on the behavior of *all* of the above groups – former teachers, likely leavers, prospective future teachers, and those temporarily out of the labor force. And in considering those possible policy changes, policymakers can learn a lot from former teachers that will be equally useful in appealing to the other constituencies that must also be reached.

The judgment of former teachers represents one of the most deeply informed yet independent points of view available to the education establishment. Former teachers often offer external confirmation of changes which current teachers say must be made to strengthen the teaching profession. When former teachers agree with current teachers about which steps should be taken, policymakers should recognize these steps as virtual mandates about how to effect meaningful change. And when they disagree with current teachers, former teachers deserve to be taken very seriously indeed.

Special Survey Method Required

In all, this report is based on interviews with 1,846 current teachers and with 500 former teachers across the country. The interviewing was conducted by telephone between April 25 and June 8, 1985. Every public school teacher from kindergarten through grade 12 had an equal chance of being drawn into the sample of current teachers. Former teachers were located by a referral process wherein random samples of current teachers and principals referred us to former teachers who were known to them. The referral method used here to locate former teachers breaks new ground in surveys in the field of education. Because there are no lists kept of former teachers, and because they are widely scattered, only a referral approach permits us to find and learn the views of this important group. The detailed survey methodology, including information on the statistical reliability of each sample, is provided in Appendix A. Appendix B includes the survey questionnaire.

Notes on Reading the Tables

An asterisk (*) on a table signifies a value of less than one-half percent (0.5%). A dash (—) represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add to 100% because of computer rounding, multiple answers from respondents, or the elimination of "no answers."

Public Release of the Survey Findings

All Louis Harris and Associates surveys are designed to adhere to the code of standards of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and the code of the National Council of Public Polls (NCPP). Because data from this survey will be released to the public, any release must stipulate that the complete report is also available, rather than simply an excerpt from the survey findings.

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Project Responsibility

The director of this project at Louis Harris and Associates was Michael R. Kagay, Ph.D., Vice President. He worked under the overall supervision of Louis Harris, Chairman. Stuart Leichenko, Research Associate, assisted in every aspect of the project.

Louis Harris and Associates gratefully acknowledges the contributions of many individuals to this project. Our colleagues at Metropolitan Life and Program Planners, Inc., in particular, did a great deal to set and to keep our sights in the right direction. However, responsibility for the findings and for their interpretation rests solely with Louis Harris and Associates.

FORMER TEACHERS AMERICA

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SURVEY FINDINGS

This summary provides an overview of the results of the survey. Many findings described in the body of the report do not appear in this summary. Interested readers are urged to examine the body of the report to understand the full findings of The Metropolitan Life Survey of former Teachers in America.

What Career Change Has Meant to Former Teachers

Career change for many former teachers has meant higher salary, greater job satisfaction, and less job stress.

1. **Former teachers frequently earn more money than current teachers.** Thirty-five percent of former teachers now earn more than $50,000 a year, while only 12% of current teachers report earning this much. The increase in median income is $4,000, or about a 19% rise in salary for the typical former teacher.

2. **Former teachers' job stress has dropped dramatically since their teaching days have ended.** Fifty-seven percent of former teachers recall that, as teachers, they felt great stress on the job several days a week or more. In their new job only 22% of former teachers say that they experience great stress several days a week or more.

3. **Former teachers' job satisfaction has risen sharply after their career change.** Ninety-six percent say they are satisfied with their new occupation as a career. This is an increase of nearly 50 percentage points from the 47% of former teachers who say they were satisfied during their teaching days. And it represents higher job satisfaction than that registered by current teachers who remain in the classroom, of whom 79% say they are satisfied.

4. **As a result of these improvements, an overwhelming majority of former teachers say they are unlikely to return to teaching in the next five years, even though many say they miss teaching.** Fifty-eight percent say they miss teaching. But 83% say they are unlikely to return to the classroom, while just 17% say they probably will.?

What Caused Former Teachers to Leave

The full significance of the improvements enjoyed by former teachers is revealed when they explain what disappointed them most about teaching and why they left the profession. Many former teachers appear to have found in their new jobs things they felt were lacking in teaching.

1. **The main reasons why former teachers left teaching were poor salaries and poor working conditions.** Sixty percent of former teachers cite poor salaries as the chief reason. Another 56% name such poor working conditions as too much paperwork, too many non-teaching duties, and lack of input about their jobs. These are the same compelling reasons for leaving teaching mentioned most often by current teachers who are considering leaving teaching.

2. **The more frequently teachers work under stress, the more likely they are to leave the profession.** This finding has implications for all teachers, since teachers experience greater stress than most Americans.

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3. Two-thirds of former teachers (64%) say that their professional prestige was worse than they had expected it would be before they began to teach. This finding underscores a theme which pervades the opinions of current teachers: that teachers are not respected as professionals by students, parents, administrators, and society.

A Look at Former Teachers in Their New Jobs

Former teachers have successfully gone into a wide range of new occupations which they consider better than teaching on many, but not all, key job criteria.

1. An overwhelming majority of former teachers have used some transferable skills to change careers. Nearly eight in ten former teachers report that they use some of the same skills in their new jobs which they previously used as teachers. Thirteen percent had a non-education undergraduate major related to their new occupation; 10% had non-education graduate training that was related; and 26% had previously held a second job that was related to their new occupation. But a majority (54%) report that their new job also required them to obtain some further education or training in order to qualify.

2. Former teachers have successfully moved into executive and managerial positions (21%), professional specialties (20%), technical occupations (5%), and careers in sales (57%) such as insurance, real estate, and the like. Current teachers who consider leaving look to enter these same occupations. But nearly twice as many current teachers (57%) aspire to enter professional specialties as the proportion of former teachers (20%) who have landed these jobs. More former teachers have instead entered sales and managerial jobs.

3. Former teachers work as hard in their new jobs as they did as educators, and most have remained with the same employer they joined upon leaving teaching. Both current and former teachers work approximately 50 hours per week on work-related duties. And 80% of former teachers who left in the past five years have remained in the job they entered upon leaving teaching.

4. Former teachers' comparisons of teaching with their new occupations provide evidence that many historic attractions of teaching – personal satisfaction, vacations, and job security – now are outweighed by salient disadvantages. Former teachers admit that job security, vacation benefits, and health benefits are better in *teaching* than in other occupations. But a majority of former teachers also believe that salary, professional prestige, control over one's work, equipment one needs for work, and intellectual challenge are all better in their new occupations than in teaching.

Signs of Teachers Most Likely to Leave

This survey dispells one widely held belief, that the most talented and qualified teachers leave the profession much more frequently than other teachers. The results of this survey challenge this assertion, revealing a number of other characteristics or telltale signs that better identify teachers who are most likely to leave or stay. This section draws together such signs from throughout the report.

FORMER TEACHERS AMERICA

1. Comparing indicators of professional quality between current and former teachers shows that all kinds of teachers – from the least qualified to the most – leave the profession at roughly similar rates. Similar proportions of current and former teachers report that they had a master's degree, had been asked to supervise other teachers, and had received a teaching award.

2. The largest exodus from teaching occurs early in teachers' careers. Forty-six percent of former teachers in this survey have less than 10 years experience, compared to 22% of current teachers.

3. Moonlighting is one of the strongest indicators of a teacher who may leave. Twenty-eight percent of current teachers say that they held a second job during the past 12 months. About twice this proportion of former teachers (54%) worked a second job during their last year as a teacher.

4. Frequent job stress is one of the most important indicators that distinguishes leavers from stayers.

5. Expressed dissatisfaction with teaching as a career is also, not surprisingly, a telltale sign. A majority of former teachers (58%) say they were dissatisfied with teaching. However, satisfaction with teaching by itself is no longer for many teachers a sufficient incentive to stay in teaching: 47% of former teachers say they were satisfied but still left for other reasons.

6. Former teachers and "likely leavers" are far more likely to believe that the intellectual challenge is better in other occupations. Thus, this opinion is an additional indicator of teachers who may be next out the door.

7. Two-thirds of former teachers are men and seven in ten former teachers taught in secondary schools. In contrast, 71% of current teachers are women and the majority of current teachers work in elementary schools. A companion report, *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 1985*, revealed that men and secondary schools teachers are more likely to consider leaving the profession. This new finding shows that such teachers do, in fact, have significantly lower retention rates.

What Must Be Done to Attract and Retain Good Teachers

Almost all former and current teachers, those most familiar with teaching, agree on what must be done to attract talented new teachers and to stop the nationwide exodus from teaching. This powerful endorsement amounts to a virtual mandate for policymakers on how to strengthen teaching and our educational system.

1. Eighty percent of both current and former teachers support changes which would help teachers to be treated more like professionals, paid more like professionals, and given working conditions and materials to allow them to perform as professionals. These changes include:

- Providing a decent salary;
- Providing more respect for teachers in today's society;
- Teaching students who are more strongly motivated to learn; and
- Providing increased financial support for the school system.

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2. Majorities of current and former teachers also agree on a number of steps which would "help a lot" to attract and produce good teachers in the future. These include:

- Providing compensation to beginning teachers comparable to other professions requiring similar training;
- Reducing time spent on non-teaching duties;
- Paying compensation partly according to qualifications;
- Providing advanced study sabbaticals;
- Upgrading accreditation standards for teacher training programs;
- Upgrading admission standards for education majors; and
- Requiring a supervised internship before certification.

Conclusion

The survey findings show that only a small fraction of former teachers (17%) say they are likely to return to teaching in the next five years. Does it seem plausible that a larger proportion of former teachers might change their mind and return if policymakers were to enact many of the changes endorsed by 8 in 10 current and former teachers? Perhaps. Trying to gauge the probable future impact of proposed policy changes is a very uncertain art. And many individuals don't know themselves exactly what they would or would not do in response to hypothetical future inducements. Yet, any increase at all in the return rate would be a significant help in reducing the expected shortage of new teacher graduates in the next decade.

But policymakers ought not pin their main hopes on any big increase in the return rate of those who have already left for new careers. People who have taken a major decision in their lives, made a career change, and are now enmeshed in the duties and rewards of a new occupation are naturally going to be much harder to influence than are those who have not yet left teaching. Prudence suggests that, if we wish to retain the teachers we have, we should concentrate on doing so before they leave, rather than hoping to attract them back after they have walked out the door and taken new jobs.

The principal impact of improving salaries and working conditions will most likely be achieved with other groups -- with those current teachers who are considering leaving the profession, with college students trying to decide on a future career, and with those former teachers, now out of the labor force raising families, who may be thinking about whether to resume their career. This survey clearly shows what steps would be effective in influencing such people.

The evidence in this survey of *Former Teachers in America* offers abundant lessons for action by policymakers. The question is whether society can and will act in time to assure sufficient numbers of qualified professional teachers in the classrooms of the future.

CHAPTER 1: PROFILE OF FORMER TEACHERS COMPARED TO CURRENT TEACHERS

Former teachers who have recently left teaching for a different occupation resemble current teachers in many ways. However, there are also some revealing differences, some of which indicate who is most likely to leave and who is more likely to stay in the profession.

Workload and Income

Many former teachers earn higher salaries than do current teachers. Thirty-five percent of former teachers are now making over $40,000 per year, while only 12% of current teachers make that amount (Table 1). The difference in median income between the two groups is $8,000, or about a 23% rise in salary for the typical former teacher. Both groups appear to be equally hard working: both groups average about 50 hours per week on work-related responsibilities (Table 2). And both groups spend one-fifth to one-fourth of their work time on paperwork unrelated to their chief duties.

Indicators of Professional Quality

Former teachers look very similar to current teachers in term of indicators of their professional quality (Table 3). Similar proportions of former and current teachers report having a master's degree completed (34% versus 33%), having been asked to supervise other teachers (51% versus 49%), and having received an award for their teaching (19% versus 17%). Thus, teachers at all levels of quality leave at fairly similar rates, including the best and the brightest. This runs counter to the conventional wisdom that the best and brightest leave at a much higher rate.

Another possible indicator of quality -- job options as other occupations at the time teachers took their first teaching job -- shows a small advantage in favor of former teachers. Thirty-two percent of former teachers report that they did have other options while just 26% of current teachers say that they had other options. Approximately 7 out of 10 of both current teachers and former teachers say that they had no other job options available.

Personal Characteristics

Seventy-one percent of current teachers are women, while 63% of former teachers are men (Table 4). This is consistent with the finding, presented in *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 1985*, that male current teachers are more likely than female teachers to contemplate leaving the profession. However, the difference in actual attrition rates is so strong that it also implies an additional finding: as primary wage earners in many families, men must feel more economic pressure to actually carry through on the career changes they contemplate, or perhaps society gives them more opportunity to do so.*

*It should also be noted that many women who were teaching were not child bearing, child rearing, or homemaking. However, our sample required that former teachers now be working in new occupations. Thus, while virtually all male former teachers qualified for our sample, some portion of female former teachers were not eligible. A sample of all former teachers in society would include more women than did our sample.

Former teachers also tend to have had somewhat fewer years of teaching experience. Forty-six percent of former teachers have less than ten years experience, compared to only 22% of current teachers. This documents what other educational researchers have found -- that retention rates are lower in the early years

Former teachers appear to be somewhat younger, too. Seventy-nine percents of former teachers are under age 40, compared to just 45% of current teachers.[**]

School Characteristics

A majority of current teachers (56%) work in elementary schools, but an even larger majority of former teachers (72%) used to work in secondary schools (Table 5). This difference is consistent with the finding, reported in *The American Teacher 1985*, that secondary school teachers are more likely to contemplate leaving than are elementary school teachers. However, the difference in actual turnover rates is so strong that it suggests an additional finding: secondary school teachers must also feel more financial pressure, generally, through job dissatisfaction, or they may be presented with more opportunities to do so. This may be connected with the gender difference reported above: more males teach secondary level, and males tend to leave at a higher rate.

There are no strong differences between current teachers and former teachers in terms of the size of place where their school is located, or the relative wealth of the school district, or affiliation with a teachers' union such as AFT or NEA.

Types of Non-Teaching Experience

There are no real differences between current teachers and former teachers in terms of their fields of formal training or their pre-teaching experience (Table 6). Approximately six out of ten in both groups have taken all their training in the field of education. And approximately eight out of ten in each group were directly into teaching rather than doing something else for a while.

[illegible]

RISING
TEACHERS
AMERICA

The most striking difference between current teachers and former teachers in regard to their non-teaching experience focuses on *second jobs* (Table 6). Twenty-eight percent of current teachers say they worked at a second job during the past twelve months, nearly twice that proportion (54%) of former teachers say that they had a second job during their last twelve months of teaching. The need for moonlighting is a telltale sign of a teacher who may leave.

OBSERVATION: The frequency of holding second jobs is connected to the gender difference observed earlier. Male current teachers are nearly 40 percentage points more likely than female current teachers to hold second jobs. This may be because they are under greater financial pressure as primary wage earners in many families. But it may also reflect the fact that they have greater opportunities in this society. Many women already have a second job as child-rearer and homemaker, and may be understandably reluctant to undertake any third job in the marketplace even though it could be useful in gaining new job skills and career contacts. Thus women would become less able to leave teaching even when they wish to.

Table 1

Former Teachers and Current Teachers Compared on Income

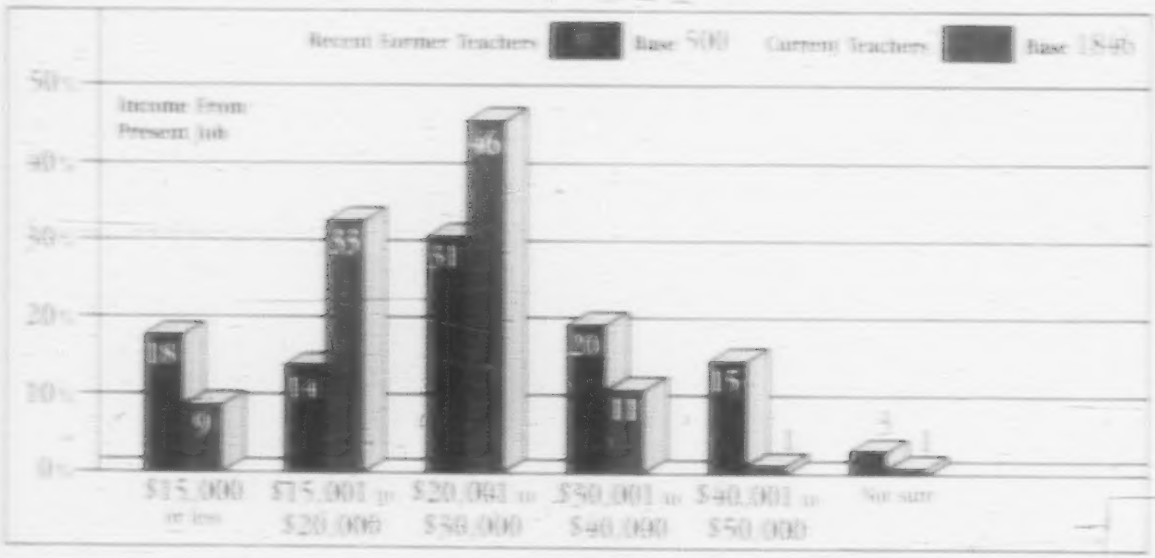
Base: Former teachers and current teachers

QUESTION : Which of the following income categories best describes the 1984 income you derived from (OCCUPATION MENTIONED IN Q. 16), before taxes? Was it (READ LIST):

QUESTION : Which of the following income categories best describes your total 1984 *household* income from all sources, before taxes?

QUESTION : Which of the following income categories best describes the 1984 income you derived from *teaching*, before taxes. Was it (READ LIST)?

QUESTION : Which of the following income categories best describes your total 1984 *household* income from *all* sources, before taxes?



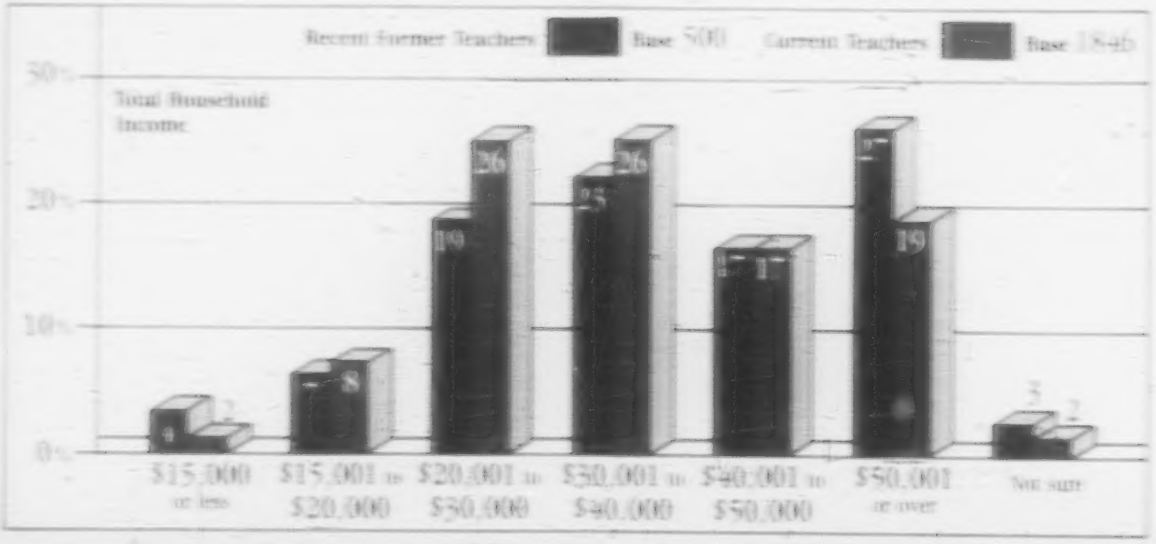


Table 2

Former Teachers and Current Teachers Compared on Their Workload

Base: Former teachers and current teachers

QUESTION: In an average week in your current job how many hours do you spend, in total, on job-related responsibilities—including all responsibilities at work, any responsibilities outside the workplace, and any work you do at home?

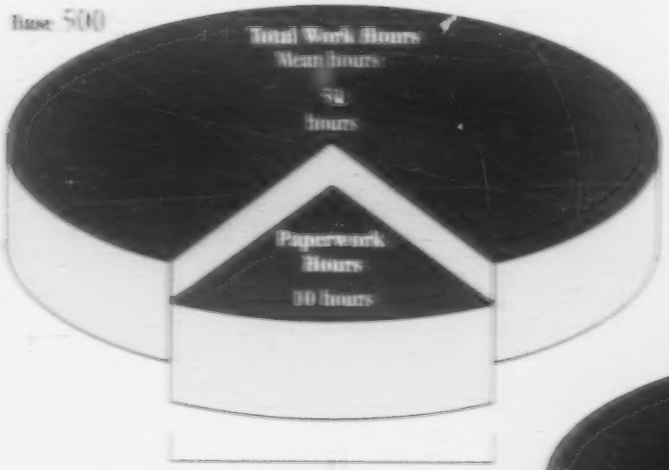
QUESTION: Of the total hours you spent in an average week on job-related responsibilities, how many hours would you say are on paperwork, administration, and other tasks not directly related to your main duties?

QUESTION: In an average week, how many hours do you spend, in total, on school-related responsibilities—including all responsibilities in the classroom, any responsibilities outside the classroom, and any work you do at home?

QUESTION: Of the total hours you spent in an average week on school-related responsibilities, how many hours would you say are on paperwork, administration, and other tasks *not* directly related to teaching students in your classes?

Recent Former Teachers

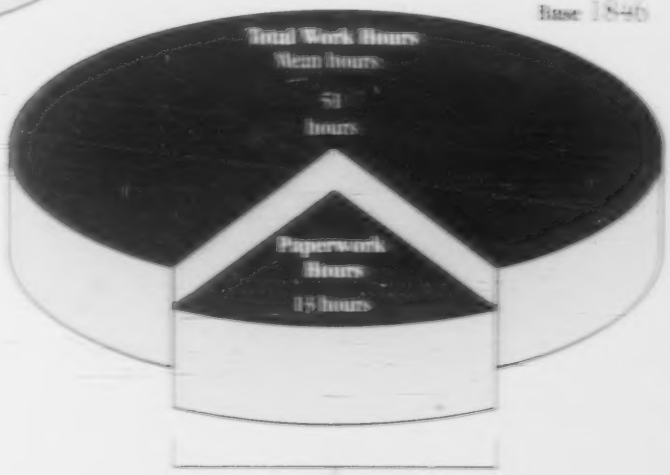
Base: 500



Paperwork as Percentage of Total
Mean %
21%

Current Teachers

Base: 1846



Paperwork as Percentage of Total
Mean %
34%

Table 3

Former Teachers and Current Teachers Compared on Some Indicators of Professional Quality

Base: Former teachers and current teachers

QUESTION: What was the *last* grade or level of school that you yourself completed?

QUESTION: When you took your first teaching job, did you have any interesting job options in *other* occupations at that time, or not?

QUESTION: Have you ever served in a position, or have you ever been asked to serve in a position, of supervising other teachers?

QUESTION: Have you ever received any award, citation, or special recognition for your teaching?

Table 4

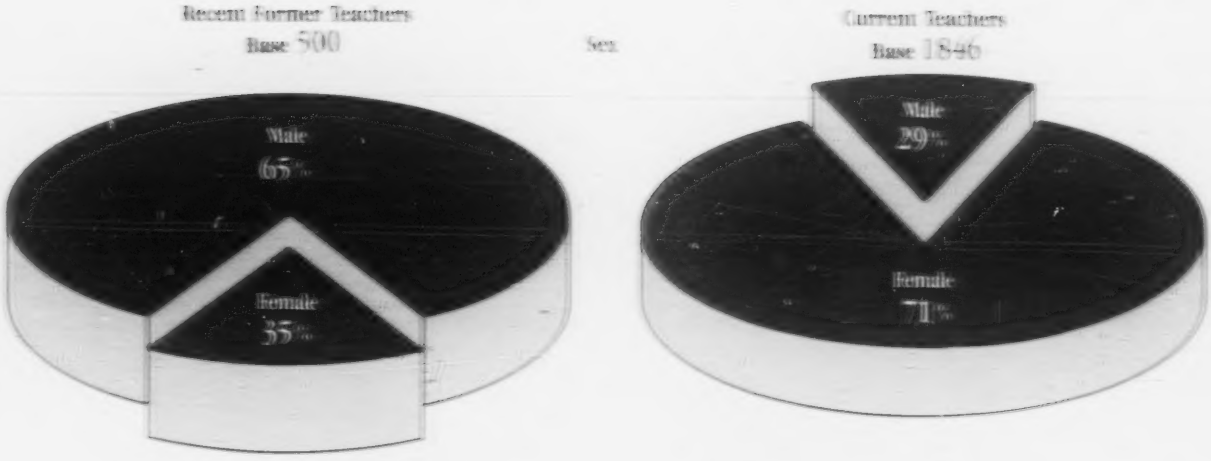
Former Teachers and Current Teachers Compared on Sex, Age, and Experience

Base: Former teachers and current teachers

QUESTION: Regardless of the number of schools you've taught in, for about how many years, in total, have you worked as a teacher?

QUESTION: How old are you?

QUESTION: Respondent sex.



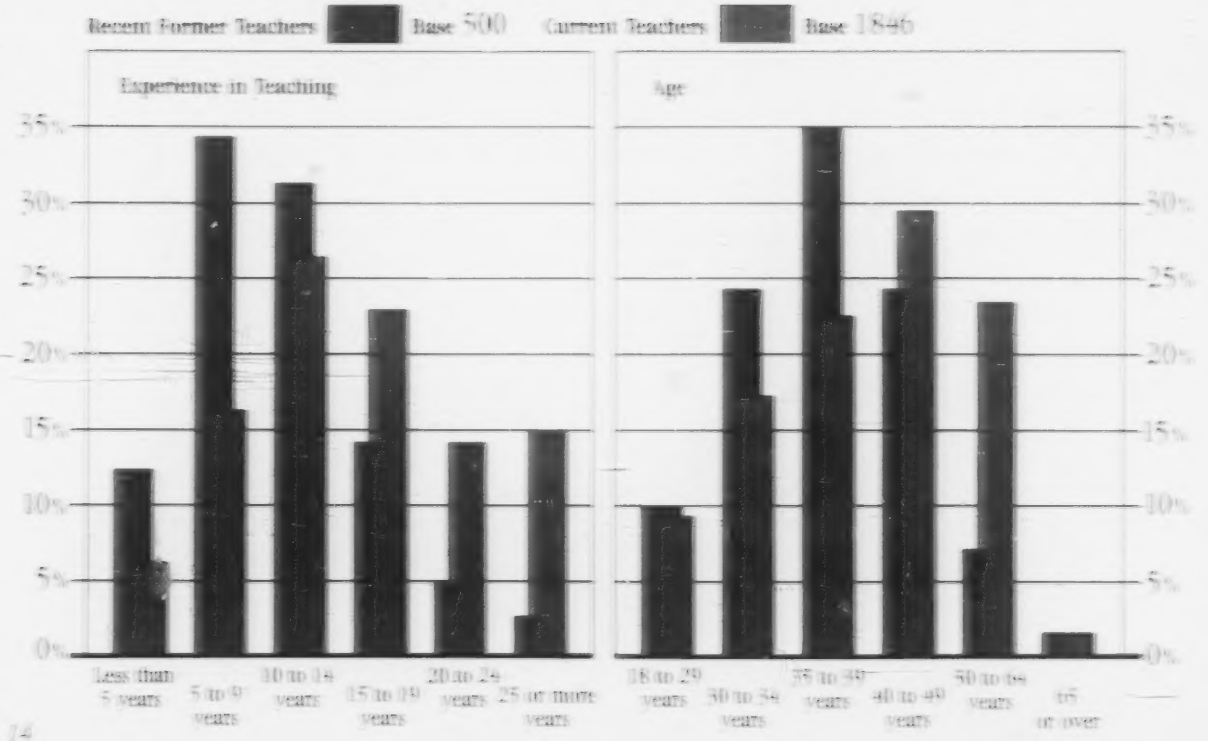


Table 5

Former Teachers and Current Teachers Compared on Aspects of Their Schools

Base: Former teachers and current teachers

QUESTION: Do you teach in an elementary school, a junior high school, or a high school?

QUESTION: For purposes of receiving state school aid, is your school district considered to be of above average wealth, average wealth, or below average wealth?

QUESTION: Is the area where your school is located considered inner city, urban, suburban, small town, or rural?

QUESTION: Are you a member of a teachers' union or association such as the AFT or NEA?

Table 6

Former Teachers and Current Teachers Compared on Amount of Non-Teaching Experience

Base: Former teachers and current teachers

QUESTION: Was your undergraduate college degree in education, or not?

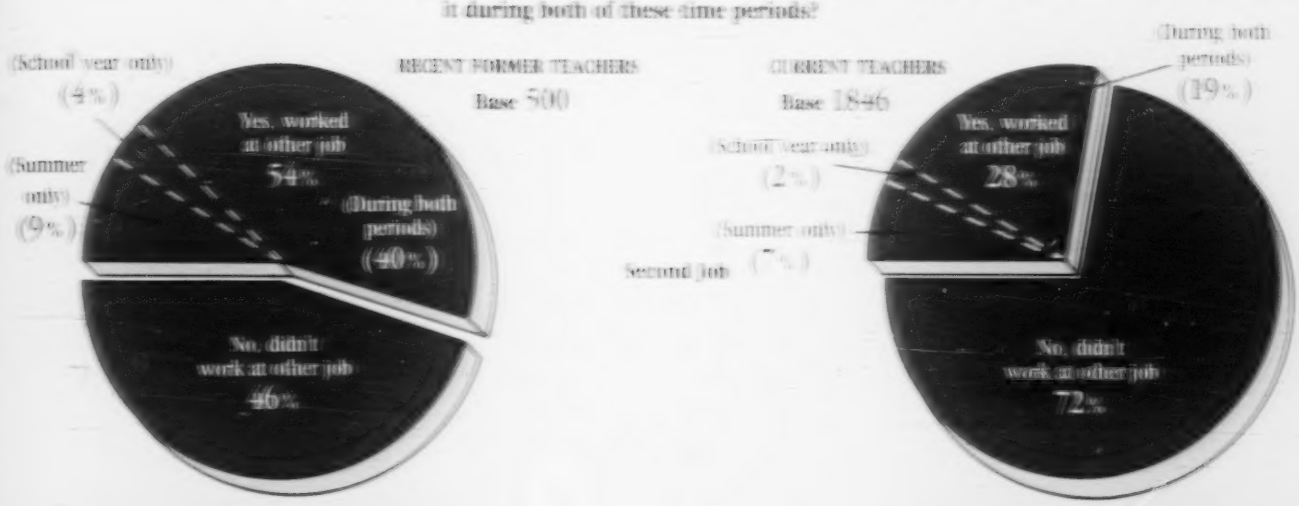
QUESTION: Was your graduate training mainly in education, or not?

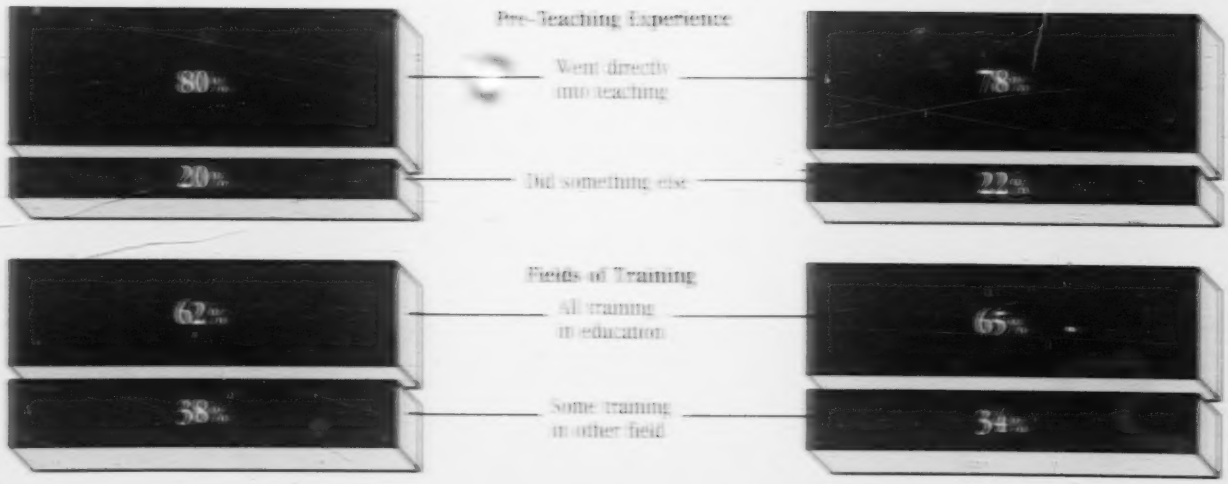
QUESTION: Did you go into teaching directly after your own education, or did you do something else for a while?

QUESTION: In addition to your teaching activities, have you worked at any other kind of job for pay at any time during the past 12 months?

QUESTION: During the last 12 month you were a teacher, in addition to your former teaching activities, did you work at any other kind of job for pay?

QUESTION: Was this other job during the summer only, during the school year only, or was it during both of these time periods?





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CHAPTER 2:

Why Teachers Leave

The Reasons That Former Teachers Give

Inadequate salary and poor working conditions dominate the list of reasons that former teachers give for leaving (Table 7). Sixty percent of former teachers cite inadequate salary as the main reason that caused them to leave. Working conditions rank as the second most important motivating factor, with 56% of former teachers citing as their main reason for leaving such conditions as too much paperwork, too many non-teaching duties, and especially lack of input into educational decision-making (14%).

Student-related factors rank next in importance: 30% of former teachers point to factors such as lack of student discipline and lack of student motivation. Discipline alone is cited by 15%. Administration-related reasons are just as important: 30% of current teachers cite reasons such as lack of administrative support (17%) and dissatisfaction with administrators (10%) as their main motivation.

Emotional aspects such as boredom, stress, frustration, and burnout are mentioned by 27% of former teachers. Lack of respect is mentioned by another 17% as their chief reason. Parent- and community-related factors are mentioned by 16% of former teachers. And many cite miscellaneous themes such as no chance for advancement (15%), or the availability of an opportunity to do something else (14%).

Table 7 presents in detail the reasons offered by former teachers for leaving. Figures add to more than 100% because teachers were free to offer more than one important reason.

Reasons Cited by Current Teachers Considering Leaving

This litany of complaints is underscored by the testimony of those *current teachers* who were or are considering leaving teaching to go into a different occupation. As they explain the reasons that caused them to consider leaving teaching, current teachers cite the *same* major themes as do former teachers, and they cite them in quite similar proportions (Table 7). Thus, over 6 in 10 cite low salary and over 4 in 10 cite difficult working conditions.

Aspects of Teaching That Proved Most Disappointing

When former teachers compare their *experience* in the teaching profession with the *expectations* they held before they went into teaching, the causes of their dissatisfaction are clarified. (See the top portion of Table 8.) Lack of professional prestige is the most common disappointment (64%). This underscores a theme which pervades the comments of current teachers, reported in *The American Teacher 1985*: teachers feel that they are not respected as professionals by students, parents, administrators, and society.

The next most common disappointments are: the number of students with special needs (55%), the degree of administrative support (54%), the level of salary and benefits (47%), and the number of hours worked each week (45%). A majority or near majority of former teachers say that their expectations were disappointed in regard to each of these aspects.

The aspects of teaching at the bottom of Table 8 are ones where expectations were most fulfilled. However, such aspects—like job security, control over one's work, caliber of one's colleagues, and response from students—were simply not sufficient to keep these former teachers in the profession. One reason may be that even these least disappointing aspects were not very fulfilling for these teachers. For most of the former teachers they merely lived up to expectation; about as many say they were worse than expected as say they were better than expected.

Inducements for Former Teachers to Return

When asked what it would take to get them to *return* to teaching, former teachers again nominate better salary and better working conditions as their two chief requirements. Fifty-two percent cite better salary, while 22% point to better working conditions such as more control and input by teachers, smaller class size, and fewer extracurricular duties (Table 9).

We need not believe that any large fraction of these former teachers actually would leave new careers to return to teaching if their conditions were met. Indeed, 21% of them volunteer that "nothing" could get them to return. But some success in increasing the size of the fraction who do return to the classroom will be essential in the coming years in order to help cover the predicted shortfalls of new teacher graduates. Thus, the kinds of considerations that former teachers would take into account in making any such decision are important information for policymakers to understand. Also, many of these same considerations are bound to influence current teachers considering leaving, prospective teachers considering an initial choice of career, and former teachers temporarily out of the labor force rearing families.

OBSERVATION: It is significant that former teachers, who have no further personal stake in the salary that teachers make or in the conditions under which teachers work, still cite the same key factors as do current teachers. This is external confirmation that such factors genuinely are motivating considerations and are not simply gripes or special pleading by parties concerned about improving their personal situation.

Table 7

What Makes Teachers Leave

Q 47-10
Q 47-12

Base: Former teachers and current teachers

QUESTION: What were the main things that *caused you to leave* teaching? Anything else?

QUESTION: What were the main things that made you consider *leaving* teaching? Anything else?

	RECENT FORMER TEACHERS	CURRENT TEACHERS WHO SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED LEAVING	"LIKELY LEAVERS"*
Base	500	985	[illegible]
	%	%	[illegible]
Inadequate, Low Salary	**60**	**62**	[illegible]
Working Conditions (net total)	**36**	**41**	[illegible]
Paperwork	6	12	[illegible]
Non-teaching duties	11	12	[illegible]
School environment, physical aspects	2	8	[illegible]
Overcrowding, class size	5	8	[illegible]
Long hours	4	5	[illegible]
Lack of input, independence, freedom	14	5	[illegible]
Workload	1	4	[illegible]
Lack of supplies, materials	3	3	[illegible]
Inadequate time for planning	1	1	[illegible]
All other	3	21	[illegible]
Student-Related (net total)	**30**	**31**	[illegible]
Lack of discipline by students	15	21	[illegible]
Lack of motivation by students	8	11	[illegible]
General attitudes of students	4	3	[illegible]
Changes in lifestyles	7	—	[illegible]
All other	2	2	[illegible]
Administration-Related (net total)	**30**	**25**	[illegible]
Lack of administrative support	17	14	[illegible]
Dissatisfaction with administration	10	8	[illegible]
Incompetent administration	7	3	[illegible]
All other	—	1	[illegible]

(continued)

*Current teachers who seriously considered leaving in the past *and* who say they are likely to leave within the next 5 years.

Table 7 (Continued)

Q FT-10
Q CT-12

What Makes Teachers Leave

Base: Former teachers and current teachers

	RECENT FORMER TEACHERS	CURRENT TEACHERS WHO SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED LEAVING	"LIKELY LEAVERS"*
Base	500	985	421
	%	%	%
Lack of Respect (net total)	17	25	17
Society's attitude toward teaching	3	7	9
Lack of respect from students	3	6	5
Lack of respect in community	4	5	5
Low status, prestige	6	4	6
Lack of respect in general	2	4	4
Lack of respect from parents	*	3	3
Not considered a professional	2	3	4
All other	—	—	—
Emotional Aspects (net total)	27	22	22
Routine, boredom	13	13	13
Stress	4	8	7
Frustration	1	5	5
Lack of fulfillment	5	4	5
Burnout	8	4	6
All other	—	1	2
Parent and Community-Related (net total)	16	21	22
Lack of parent support	13	18	18
Lack of community support	2	2	4
All other	1	2	2
Miscellaneous			
Opportunity to do something else	14	7	7
No chance of advancement	15	5	7
Lack of school funds, budget	6	5	5
Teacher testing	1	2	3
New laws, reforms	1	2	3
Better benefits elsewhere	4	1	1
Dissatisfaction with colleagues	10	1	1
All other reasons mentioned	10	6	7

*Less than 0.5%.

NOTE: Figures add to more than 100% because teachers were free to offer more than one reason in answer to the open-ended question. "Net" figures show the total giving at least one answer within a major grouping of answers.

* Current teachers who seriously considered leaving in the past and who say they are likely to leave within the next 5 years.

Table 8

Aspects of Teaching That Initially Disappointed Former Teachers

Base: 500 recent former teachers

QUESTION: Compared to what you expected before you went into teaching, did you find the (READ EACH ITEM) to be better than you expected, about the same as you expected, or worse than you expected?

		Better Than Expected	About Same as Expected	Worse Than Expected	Not Sure
Aspects That Disappointed More Than One-Half					
Professional prestige	%	5	30	64	*
Number of students with special needs you had to deal with	%	7	37	55	1
[illegible] support	%	14	32	54	*
Aspects That Disappointed Between One-Third and One-Half					
Salary and benefits	%	5	48	47	*
Total number of hours you worked each week	%	6	49	45	*
Equipment you had to work with	%	25	37	37	1
Personal satisfaction	%	27	37	36	*
Intellectual challenge	%	13	53	33	*
Aspects That Disappointed Fewer Than One-Third					
Response of the students	%	22	48	29	*
Caliber of the colleagues you worked with	%	21	54	24	*
Your control over your own work	%	33	41	24	1
Job security	%	20	58	21	*

*Less than 0.5%

Table 9

What It Would Take to Get Former Teachers to Return to Teaching

Base: Former teachers

QUESTION: What would it take to get you to return to teaching? Anything else?

	Recent Former Teachers
Base	500
	%
Better Salary (net total)	52
Better pay	45
Pay comparable to current job	7
Merit pay system	5
All other	*
Better Working Conditions (net total)	22
Better control, more input on decisions	13
Smaller class size	5
Fewer extracurricular duties	4
Less paperwork	2
Better supplies	1
All other	2
Better Job Benefits/Advancement (net total)	13
If I could teach my chosen subject area	4
If I could teach at a different level	3
Better benefits	3
More job security	2
Opportunity for advancement	2
Twelve month employment	2
All other	*
Administration-Related Improvements (net total)	9
More supportive administration	8
All other	1
Student-Related Improvements (net total)	9
More motivated students	5
Improved student discipline	4
All other	1

Table 9 (Continued)

What It Would Take to Get Former Teachers to Return to Teaching

Base: Former teachers

	Former Teachers
Base	500
	%
[illegible] (net total)	8
More respect from society	5
More respect from [illegible] community	2
More respect in general	2
More respect from administrators	1
More respect from parents	1
More respect from students	1
All other	–
Parent-and Community-Related Improvements (net total)	6
More parental support	4
More community support	1
All other	–
Miscellaneous	
If I lost my [illegible] position	6
I am satisfied with my current job	5
I am thinking about it/applying now	5
More funding for school system	2
I need more time, a few more years	1
All other reasons mentioned	13
Don't know what could get me to return	1
"Nothing" could get me to return	23

[illegible]

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CHAPTER 3:

Teaching and Job Stress

Decline in Stress After Switching to a New Occupation

Former teachers' job stress has dropped dramatically since their teaching days ended (top of Table 3B). A majority (57%) of former teachers recall that, as teachers, they were under great stress several days a week or more. In their current jobs, only 22% report such frequency of stress.

Job Stress Among Current Teachers

Teaching is a stressful occupation. Thirty-six percent of current teachers report that they experience great stress several days a week or more as part of their teaching job (bottom of Table 3B). By comparison, a recent Harris survey for *Prevention* magazine showed that among American adults as a whole, only 27% experience great stress that often.

As reported in *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 1985*, the degree to which teachers experience stress has an impact on considerations of leaving or staying in teaching or leaving the profession. Teachers who report stress several times a week or more are more likely to have seriously considered leaving than are those teachers who experience stress once a week or less. And they are more likely to think they might leave in the next five years.

OBSERVATIONS: The findings suggest that teachers who leave teaching may tend to be those subjected to particularly frequent stress and/or those who are less psychologically prepared to deal with potentially stressful situations. Unusually frequent stress should thus be considered a key telltale sign of a teacher who may leave. And programs that help to reduce stressful conditions in the working environment, or that help teachers to cope better with stress, might be particularly useful in any effort by school systems to improve their retention rate of teachers. Less-experienced teachers, who tend to have lower retention rates, may be in particular need of such help in preventing or coping with stress.

Table 10

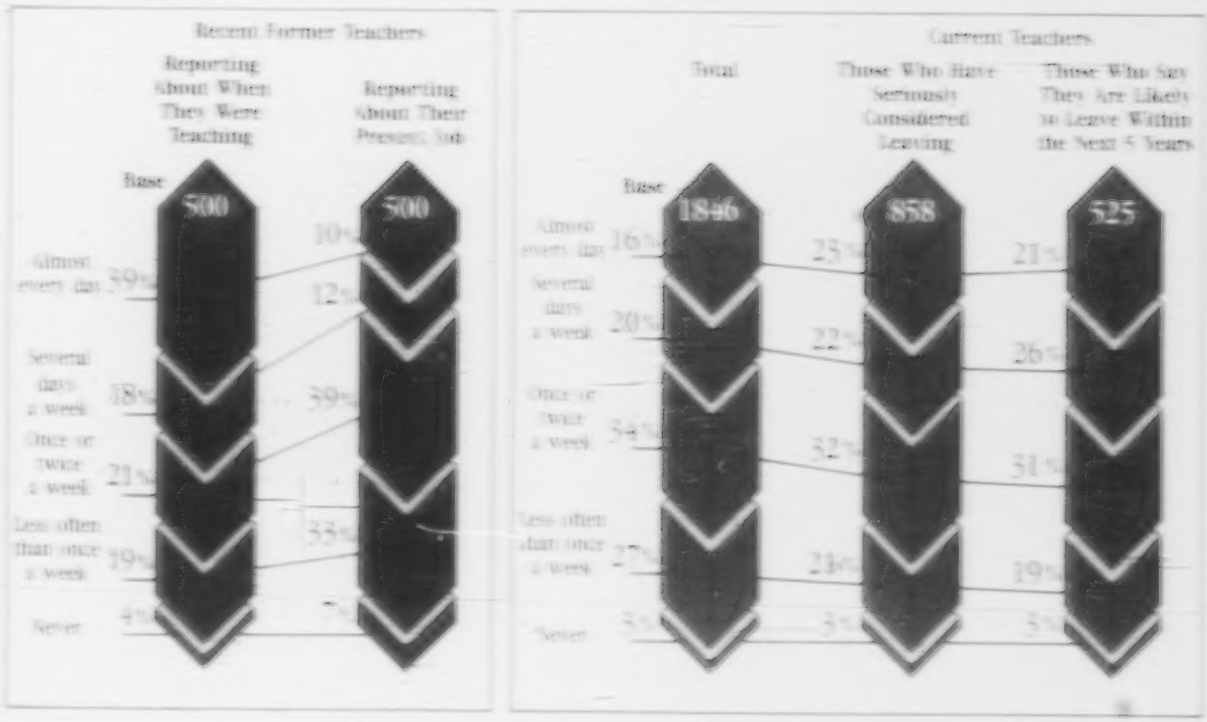
Former Teachers and Current Teachers Compared on Job Stress

Base: Former teachers and current teachers

QUESTION: Almost all people have some stress in their lives, but some have a *great deal* of stress. In your current job, how often do *you* feel under *great* stress—almost every day, several days a week, once or twice a week, less often than once a week, or never?

QUESTION: And when you worked as a teacher, how often did you feel under *great* stress—almost every day, several days a week, once or twice a week, less often than once a week, or never?

QUESTION: Almost all people have some stress in their lives, but some have a *great deal* of stress. In your job as a teacher, how often do *you* feel under *great* stress—almost every day, several days a week, once or twice a week, less often than once a week, or never?



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CHAPTER 4:

Where Teachers Go

Occupations That Attract Current Teachers

When current teachers seriously contemplate leaving the profession, they are attracted by a broad range of different occupations (Table 11). These include executive, managerial, and administrative posts (15%), various kinds of professional specialties in the arts, the sciences, and the helping professions (37%), technical occupations such as in the fields of science and computers (11%), various sales occupations from insurance to real estate to store ownership (24%), as well as others. Table 11 presents full details, based on those teachers who have seriously considered going into some specific new occupation.

Occupations Into Which Former Teachers Actually Go

When teachers go beyond contemplation and actually move from the teaching profession into some new career, they do indeed successfully go into these same four broad categories of occupations (Table 11). However, the proportions of former teachers going into each of the four major categories during the past five years prove to be somewhat different from those contemplated by current teachers. Table 11 presents in detail the new occupations actually reported by former teachers.

Somewhat *fewer* former teachers are now in professional specialties (20% as compared with 37% contemplated), somewhat fewer have also gone into technical occupations (5% as compared with 11% contemplated). On the other hand, rather *more* former teachers have actually moved into executive, managerial, and administrative posts (23% compared with 15% contemplated) — and considerably more have also gone into sales occupations (37% compared with 24% contemplated).

Thus, almost twice as many teachers aspire to professional and technical specialties as actually land such jobs. These differences could result from the kinds of job *opportunities* that actually presented themselves to teachers in the marketplace during the past five years (e.g., fewer professional jobs and more business jobs). The differences could also result from the kinds of *individuals* who disproportionately tend to move beyond contemplation and actually make a career change (e.g., more men, more secondary-level teachers who may graduate toward business by choice). A partial test of these two rival explanations is given in Table 12 by the job preferences of "likely leavers" — those current teachers who say they are likely to leave in the next five years.

The job preferences of "likely leavers" closely resemble the pattern of jobs preferred by all the current teachers in Table 11, rather than the pattern of jobs actually held by former teachers. This key finding suggests that it is not so much the differential movement of *individuals* from teaching into jobs of their choice, but rather the results of *opportunities* in the job market during the past five years, that has routed teachers more toward business and management positions than they initially hoped.

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OBSERVATION: What is it about the reality of the job market during the past five years that has channelled former teachers disproportionately toward management and sales? The sheer number of jobs available may simply have been greater in business. But many teachers' skills may also be more transferable to the business world than they are to other professions. This may be one more way in which some teachers are reminded that they are not always viewed by society as being true professionals to the extent they would like.

Some Factors Facilitating the Switch to a New Occupation

Transferability of skills is clearly a major advantage in switching careers (Table 12). Nearly 8 in 10 former teachers report that they continue to use in their new job some of the same skills they previously used in teaching. Some former teachers (15%) already had a non-education undergraduate major related to their new occupation; a similar proportion (10%) already had a non-education graduate field of study related to their new occupation. But a majority (54%) report that some further training or additional education was also necessary to qualify for their new occupation.

There are no differences between male former teachers and female former teachers on the above characteristics. However, such a difference does exist when it comes to having had a *second job related* to one's new occupation. Thirty-one percent of male former teachers report having had this advantage; only 16% of female former teachers can report the same. As noted earlier, many women teachers already have a second job as child-rearer or homemaker. Many of them would be understandably reluctant to undertake any third job in the marketplace, and thus they enjoy fewer opportunities to gain new job skills, career contacts, etc.

Job Aspects in Which Teaching Is Rated Better

When current teachers and former teachers compare the teaching profession with other occupations, they are in considerable agreement about the chief aspects on which teaching *wins* out over other professions. (See the top portion of Table 15 and of Table 14.) Both groups rank job security and vacation benefits as the top two aspects on which teaching is better than other occupations. Both groups also think that teaching is better in terms of its health insurance benefits. These represent widely acknowledged advantages that the teaching profession enjoys as people calculate pluses and minuses of their career choices. But these historic attractions of the job now seem to be outweighed for many teachers by some salient disadvantages.

Jobs Aspects in Which Other Occupations Are Rated Better

Current teachers and former teachers are also in agreement about the aspects on which teaching *loses* out most to other professions. Both groups cite these four aspects: salary, professional prestige, control over one's own work, and the equipment one has to work with. (See the bottom portion of Table 15 and Table 14.) Both groups also think that other occupations are better than teaching in terms of the total number of hours worked each week. These perceptions are powerful liabilities for teaching as people contemplate career decisions.

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Job Aspects Over Which Current and Former Teachers Disagree

Beyond these aspects, current teachers and former teachers are in *disagreement*. Current teachers believe that personal satisfaction, the caliber of one's colleagues, intellectual challenge, and retirement benefits are better in teaching. However, former teachers believe that their *new* occupation is better on each of these same four aspects.

As compared to more *concrete* aspects — like salary or vacations — it is possible that these more *subjective* aspects — such as job satisfaction, opinion of one's colleagues, and feelings of intellectual challenge — may be affected by a certain degree of rationalization. This would permit these aspects to be seen as better in one's currently chosen occupation, whether that happens to be teaching or some new career.

However, it is also possible that these more subjective aspects are genuinely motivating factors that can help us to distinguish teachers who may leave from those who will stay. A major finding in *The American Teacher 1985* is that personal satisfaction in working with students is the number one reason for *staying* in teaching given by teachers who have seriously considered leaving but decided not to do so. It would therefore be quite understandable if those teachers who eventually do choose to leave might feel increasingly in the years prior to leaving that greater job satisfaction lies in some new career. The same thing might also be true in regard to feelings about colleagues and intellectual challenge: those teachers who are to leave teaching may reach — in advance of leaving — quite different judgments from those teachers who are to stay in teaching.

Some confirmation of this is offered in Table 15 which shows how the 12 job aspects are rated by "likely leavers" — those current teachers who say they are likely to leave teaching in the next five years. On 6 out of the 12 aspects these "likely leavers" have already perceptively shifted toward the patterns shown by those who have already left. And the two aspects showing the largest shift are *personal satisfaction* and sense of *intellectual challenge*. Therefore, these should be treated as two more key telltale signs.

OBSERVATION: The frequent similarity of findings from current teachers and former teachers adds confirmation to many key points that are reported here. Current teachers' perceptions of other occupations can potentially be distorted by lack of direct knowledge, by misinformation, by rationalization, or by wishful thinking. Therefore, it is particularly useful in this area to have available the views of former teachers, who have actually moved into some new occupation, and who have gained some firsthand experience on which to compare. (Former teachers, too, may potentially suffer some rationalization or wishful thinking, but it may be presumed to be *different* from that of current teachers.)

Table 11

The Other Occupations That Attract Teachers

Base: Former teachers and current teachers

QUESTION: What occupation are you currently in?

QUESTION: The most recent time you considered going into a different occupation, what occupation was that?

	RECENT FORMER TEACHERS	CURRENT TEACHERS WHO SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED LEAVING FOR SOME SPECIFIC NEW OCCUPATION	"LIKELY LEAVERS"
Base	500	782	542
	%	%	%
Executive, Managerial, Administrative (total)	**21**	**15**	**16**
Personnel, labor relations	4	3	4
Education-related administration	1	1	1
Manager, administrator	8	5	6
Accountant, auditor	1	1	1
All other	7	5	4
Professional Specialties (total)	**20**	**37**	**37**
Engineer	2	2	1
Mathematician and computer scientist	1	2	1
Natural scientist	1	2	1
Health occupation	2	4	5
Teaching at some other level	*	2	3
Counselor	5	6	9
Librarian	*	1	1
Psychologist, social scientist	*	2	1
Social worker, recreation worker, religious worker	1	2	1
Lawyer	1	2	2
Author	1	1	1
Designer	2	1	2
Painter, artist, sculptor,	1	2	2
Performer, performing artist	*	2	2
Editor, reporter	*	2	1
Public relations	1	2	3
All other	2	3	3

(continued)

"Current teachers who seriously considered leaving for some specific new occupation *and* who say they are likely to leave within the next 5 years.

Table 11 (Continued)

The Other Occupations That Attract Teachers

Base: Former teachers and current teachers

	RECENT FORMER TEACHERS	CURRENT TEACHERS WHO SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED LEAVING FOR SOME SPECIFIC NEW OCCUPATION	"LIKELY LEAVERS"*
Base	500	782	342
	%	%	%
Technical Occupations (total)	5	11	10
Science technician	1	1	1
Computer programmer	4	7	6
All other	1	2	1
Sales Occupations (total)	37	24	25
Sales supervisor or owner	9	4	5
Insurance	12	2	3
Real estate	5	6	6
Securities	2	1	1
Commodities	6	2	1
Business in general	—	2	2
All other	3	6	6
Administrative Support and Clerical (total)	5	7	5
Ticket or reservation agent	1	1	2
Mail clerk, postal clerk	1	2	1
Secretary	*	1	1
All other	3	3	1
Service Occupations	2	1	1
Farming, Forestry, Fishing	3	2	3
Precision Production, Craft, Repair	5	2	2
Operator, Fabricator, Laborer	2	1	1

*Less than 0.5%.

*Current teachers who seriously considered leaving for some specific new occupation *and* who say they are likely to leave within the next 5 years.

Table 12

Q. F7-F5, 16, F11b, F12b, F16

How the New Occupations of Former Teachers Relate to Past Training and Experience

Base: Former teachers

QUESTION: In your new occupation do you use some of the skills you used in teaching, or does your new occupation require different skills?

QUESTION: Did you need any new education or additional training to qualify yourself for your new occupation, or not?

QUESTION: Was your college subject related, or not related to the occupation you went into *after* you left teaching?

QUESTION: Was your graduate training related, or not related to the occupation you went into *after* you left teaching?

QUESTION: Was that (second) job related, or not related to the occupation you went into *after* you left teaching?

	RECENT FORMER TEACHERS		
	TOTAL	SEX	
		MALE	FEMALE
Base	500	326	174
	%	%	%
Transferability of Skills			
Use some skills from teaching	77	77	77
Use different skills	23	23	23
New Training Needed			
Needed new training or education	54	54	54
Did not need new training or education	46	46	46
Undergraduate Field Related			
Related	13	14	12
Not related	13	12	13
No non-education undergraduate field	74	74	74
Graduate Field Related			
Related	10	10	10
Not related	11	11	11
No non-education graduate field	79	79	78
Second Job Related			
Related	26	31	16
Not related	28	33	18
No second job for pay	46	36	67

Table 13

Former Teachers Compare Teaching Versus Other Occupations

Base: 500 recent former teachers

QUESTION: We'd like you to rate some of the aspects of teaching *compared* to (OCCUPATION MENTIONED IN Q. 14). Is the (READ EACH ITEM) better in teaching or better in (OCCUPATION MENTIONED IN Q. 14)?

		Better in Teaching	Better in Other Occupation	Same, No Difference (Volunteered)	Not Sure
Aspects in Which Teaching Is Rated Better or Equal					
Vacation benefits	%	59	35	6	1
Job security	%	49	35	16	*
Health insurance benefits	%	40	40	19	1
Aspects in Which Other Occupations Are Rated Better					
Retirement benefits	%	39	49	11	1
Total number of hours worked each week	%	38	42	18	2
Caliber of the colleagues you work with	%	31	42	25	2
Intellectual challenge	%	26	56	17	*
Personal satisfaction	%	25	58	15	1
Your control over your own work	%	15	75	10	*
Salary	%	14	79	6	1
Professional prestige	%	15	75	12	1
Equipment you have to work with	%	8	75	15	3

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 14

Current Teachers Compare Teaching Versus Other Occupations

Base: 714 current teachers who seriously considered leaving for some specific new occupation

QUESTION: We'd like you to rate some of the aspects of teaching *compared* to (OCCUPATION MENTIONED IN Q. 14). From what you know, is/are the (READ EACH ITEM) better in teaching or better in (OCCUPATION MENTIONED IN Q. 14)?

		Better in Teaching	Better in Other Occupation	Same, No Difference (Volunteered)	Not Sure
Aspects in Which Teaching Is Rated Better or Equal					
Job security	%	69	19	9	3
Vacation benefits	%	68	24	5	3
Personal satisfaction	%	65	23	8	4
Caliber of the colleagues you work with	%	50	26	20	4
Intellectual challenge		47	38	13	2
Retirement benefits	%	44	38	8	11
Health insurance benefits	%	40	35	17	9
Aspects in Which Other Occupations Are Rated Better					
Total number of hours worked each weeks	%	33	47	16	3
Your control over your own work	%	31	57	9	3
Equipment you have to work with	%	17	68	11	5
Professional prestige	%	18	74	6	3
Salary	%	12	81	5	3

Table 15

"Likely Leavers" Compare Teaching Versus Other Occupations

Base: 342 current teachers who seriously considered leaving for some specific new occupation and who say they are likely to leave in the next five years

QUESTION: We'd like you to rate some of the aspects of teaching *compared* to (OCCUPATION MENTIONED IN Q. 14). From what you know, is/are the (READ EACH ITEM) better in teaching or better in (OCCUPATION MENTIONED IN Q. 14)?

		Better in Teaching	Better in Other Occupation	Same, No Difference (Volunteered)	Not Sure
Aspects in Which Teaching is Rated Better or Equal					
Job security	%	67	19	10	4
Vacation benefits	%	61	29	7	4
Personal satisfaction	%	54	35	10	4
Caliber of the colleagues you work with	%	45	31	20	5
Health insurance benefits	%	42	36	15	8
Aspects in Which Other Occupations Are Rated Better					
Retirement benefits	%	41	44	8	7
Intellectual challenge	%	34	48	16	2
Total number of hours worked each week	%	29	46	20	5
Your control over your own work	%	20	65	12	3
Equipment you have to work with	%	14	68	13	5
Salary	%	10	81	5	3
Professional prestige	%	13	74	8	5

CHAPTER 5:

Former Teachers Look Back

Former Teachers Miss Teaching, but Are Unlikely to Return

Once they leave for a new job, former teachers are not likely to come back, even though many miss teaching. A majority of former teachers (56%) say that they miss teaching. But, an overwhelming majority (81%) also say that it is unlikely that they will return to teaching, at least within the next five years (Table 4.1).

And why should they return with conditions as they currently are? Former teachers tend to make more money and to have less stress in their new jobs, as we have seen. And, as we will see below, they are far more satisfied with their current work than they were during their last years of teaching in the new occupation.

Job Satisfaction: Then Versus Now

An overwhelming 91% of former teachers say they are satisfied with their new occupation as a career. This represents an increase of nearly 50 percentage points from the 42% of former teachers who say they were satisfied during their teaching days. This may include some degree of rationalization in the aftermath of an important decision and transition, but it suggests that most former teachers feel that they made the right shift for them (Table 1.1). It also helps to explain why so few say they are likely to return to teaching.

Further evidence on the satisfaction of former teachers with their new career comes from the fact that most former teachers have remained with the employers they initially moved upon leaving teaching, rather than moving around (Table 3.1). Eighty percent of former teachers have had only one job since they left teaching. Sixteen of the remaining 20% have had two different jobs. Only 4% have had three or more different jobs since leaving teaching. Even when we look at just those former teachers who have been out the longest (4 to 5 years), we find that over 77% of them have remained in their initial job.

Former teachers are also more satisfied with their new careers than current teachers are with teaching. As reported in The American Teacher 2001, 75% of current teachers who remain in the classroom are satisfied with teaching as a career. As we have just seen, 91% of former teachers are satisfied with their new occupation after their career change.

OBSERVATION - Expressed dissatisfaction with teaching as a career is one of the key telltale signs of a teacher who may leave. A majority of former teachers recall that they were dissatisfied with teaching as a career during their teaching days. However, the fact that a current teacher may say that he or she takes satisfaction in teaching cannot automatically be taken as assurance that all is well. This is shown by the fact that 47% of former teachers say that they, too, were satisfied with teaching as a career, yet they still left due to other factors. It should be recognized that, while satisfaction in teaching is an essential motivation, it is not in itself a sufficient motivation to keep people in the profession.

Who Is Most Likely Versus Least Likely to Return

Table 18 sketches a portrait of those recent former teachers who might return to the classroom (17%) as compared to those who are unlikely to return (81%). The former teacher who is more likely to return is: female, worked at the elementary level, left less than two years ago, never received an award for teaching but was satisfied with teaching as a career, did not hold a second job while teaching, and has a household income that is now under $40,000. For example, some of the teachers in this category volunteered during the interview that they recently had to move to another part of the country because their spouse or family was relocating, that they had not yet found a teaching position in their new area, so that they had taken another kind of job which they hoped would be temporary. This type of person would seem to have a high probability of returning to the classroom.

The former teacher who is unlikely to return tends to be a mirror image of the above portrait: male, worked at the secondary level, left four or five years ago, received an award for teaching but was dissatisfied with teaching as a career, had to hold a second job while teaching, and has a household income that is now over $40,000.

ROBBINS
TEACHERS
AMERICA

OBSERVATION: In attempting to deal with the predicted shortfall of new teacher graduates in the years ahead, it will be necessary for policymakers to find ways to reduce the number of teachers who leave the profession and to increase the number of former teachers who subsequently return. Possible policies to accomplish this are the subject of the next three chapters.

Is it realistic to expect that more than 17% of former teachers in new jobs might change their minds and return to the classroom if salary and conditions were to improve? Perhaps. But one should probably not look for any large and dramatic rise in the return rate. These people have already taken a major decision in their lives, successfully made a career change, and are now enmeshed in the responsibilities and the rewards of a new occupation. On grounds of efficiency alone, one may argue, if we wish to retain the teachers we have, it will be easier to do so before they leave rather than after they have gone out the door to take new jobs. But many of the policy changes and improvements that will appeal to former teachers will also have influence (perhaps even more influence) on the other groups that policymakers need to reach, such as current teachers considering leaving, and college students trying to decide on a future career.

It should also be noted that one major reserve labor pool of certified and experienced former teachers is *not* represented in our sample of former teachers who are in new occupations. That group consists of those former teachers who are temporarily out of the labor force for various reasons, including rearing families. The possible policies discussed in the next three chapters will affect this important group, too, and will influence the rate at which they decide to resume their careers in the classrooms of the future.

Table 16

Whether Former Teachers Miss Teaching, and Whether They Might Return to Teaching

Base: 500 recent former teachers

QUESTION: How likely is it that you might return to teaching sometime within the next five years—very likely, fairly likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

QUESTION: Do you miss teaching a great deal, somewhat, a little, or not at all?

Total Former Teachers

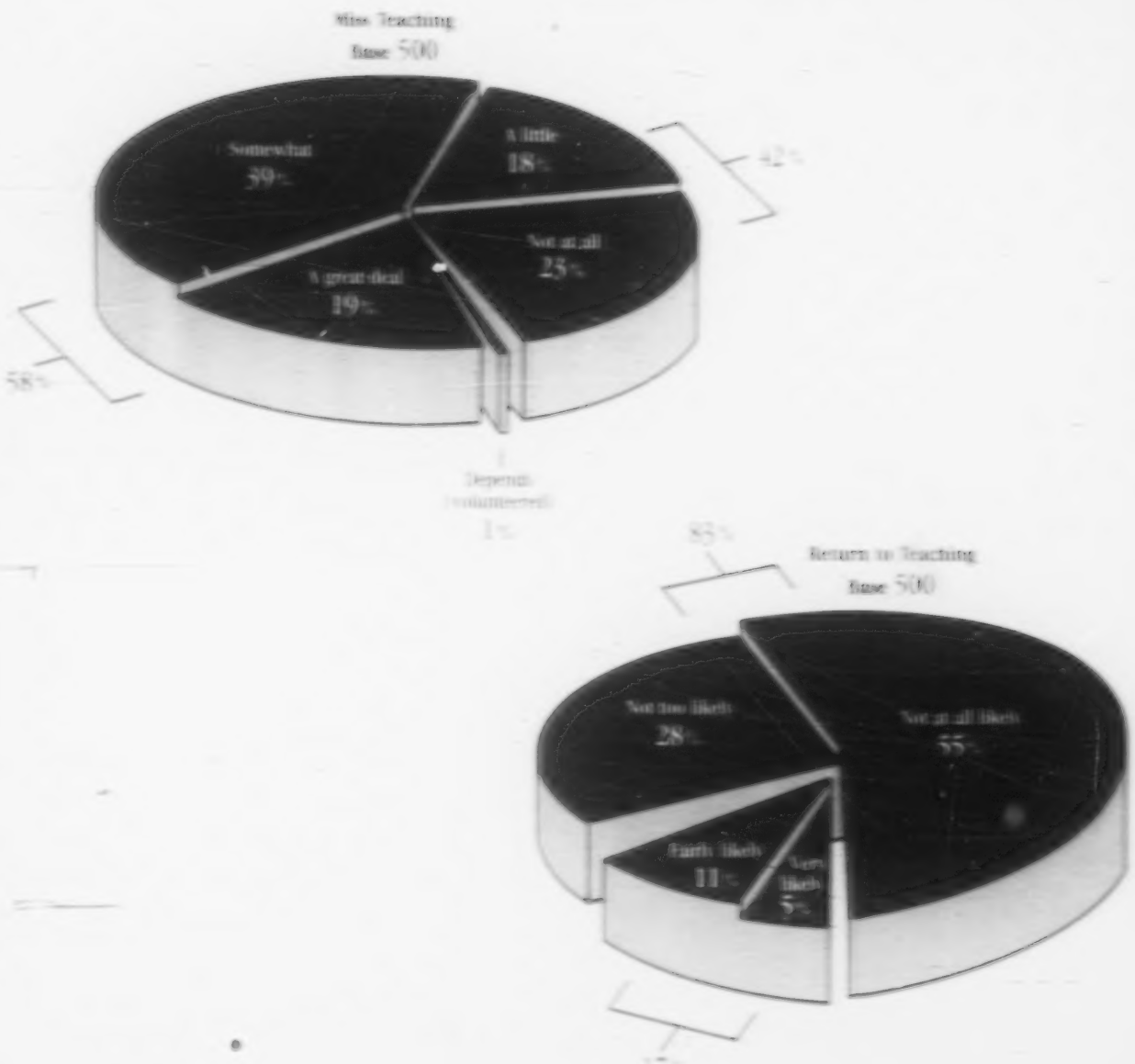


Table 17

Former Teachers Compare Their Career Satisfaction Then and Now

Base: Former teachers

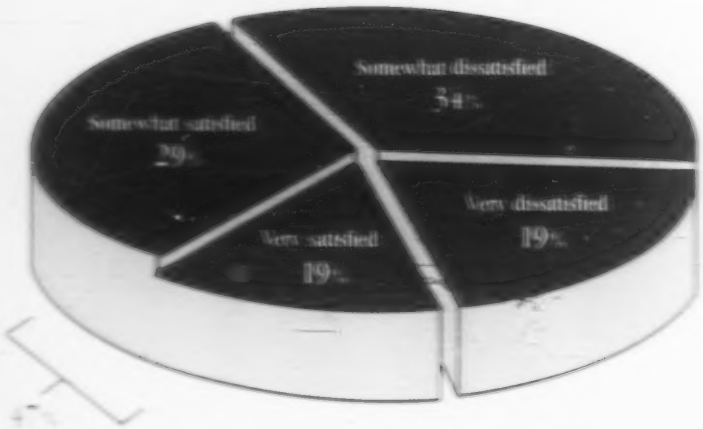
QUESTION: All in all, how satisfied would you say you were with teaching as a career — very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

QUESTION: All in all how satisfied would you say you are with (OCCUPATION MENTIONED IN Q. 14) as a career — very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

RECENT FORMER TEACHERS

Reporting About When They Were Teaching

Base: 500



Reporting About Their Present Job

Base: 500

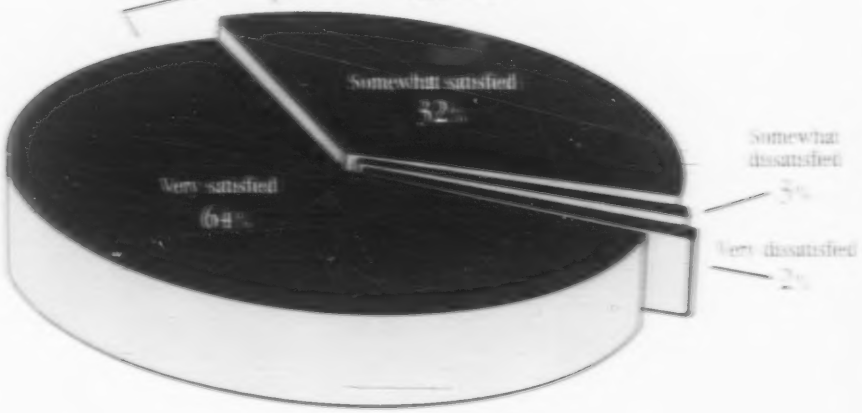


Table 18

Which Former Teachers Are Likely to Return

Base: 500 recent former teachers

QUESTION: How *likely* is it that you might return to teaching sometime within the next five years—very likely, fairly likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

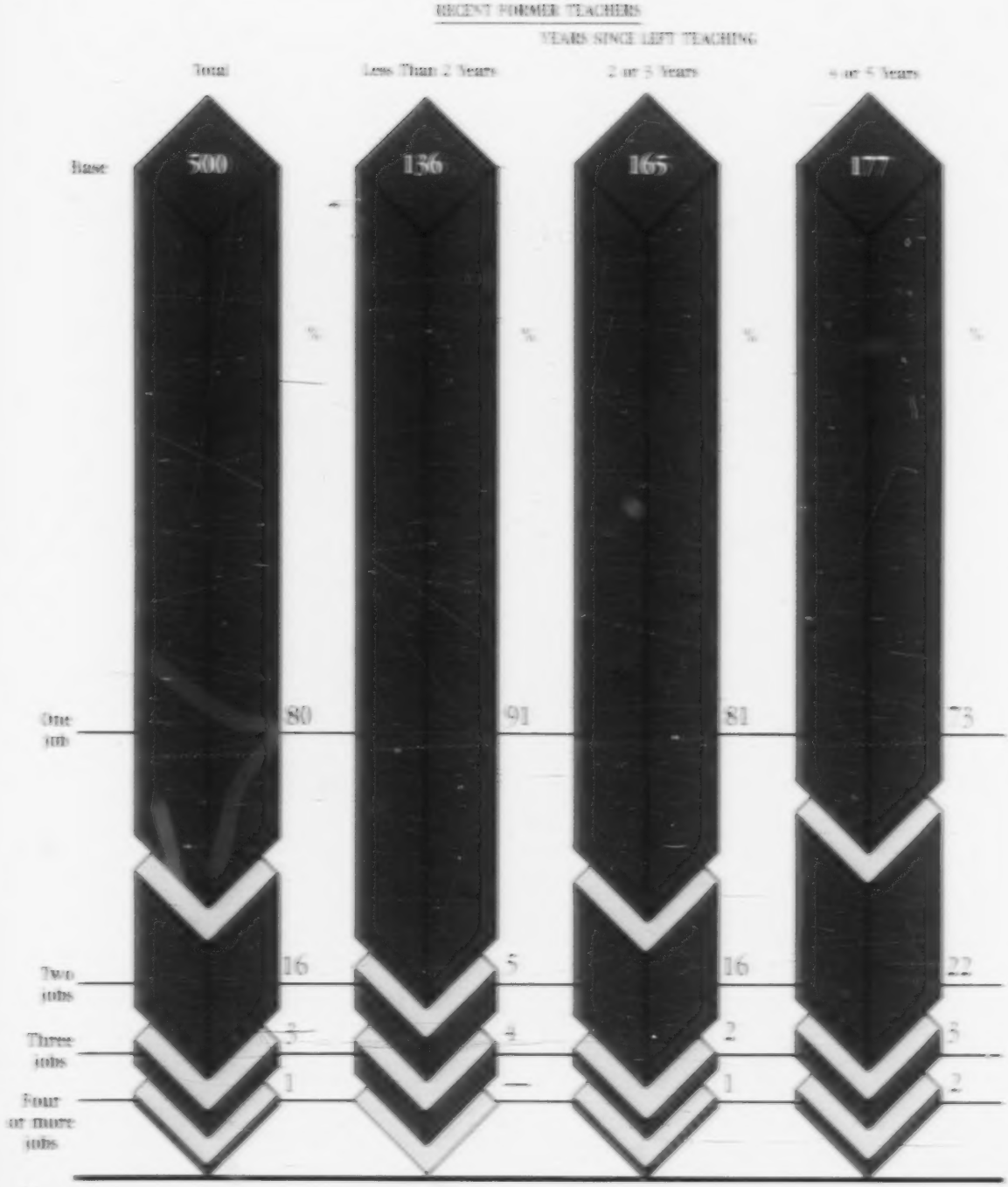
		Base	Very Likely or Fairly Likely	Not Too Likely or Not at All Likely
Total Former Teachers	%	**500**	**17**	**83**
Sex				
Male	%	326	12	88
Female	%	174	26	74
Last School Type				
Elementary	%	145	20	80
Junior high	%	167	12	88
High school	%	250	16	83
Years Since Left Teaching				
Less than 2 years	%	136	24	76
2 or 3 years	%	165	16	84
4 or 5 years	%	177	12	88
Award for Teaching				
Received	%	196	12	88
Never received	%	301	20	81
Satisfaction With Teaching as a Career				
Satisfied	%	237	26	74
Dissatisfied	%	261	8	92
Worked at Second Job During Last Year of Teaching				
Had second job	%	268	14	86
No second job	%	232	20	80
Household Income Now				
$30,000 or less	%	152	23	77
$30,001 to $40,000	%	114	21	79
$40,001 or more	%	218	11	89

Table 19

The Number of New Jobs Held by Former Teachers

Base: 500 recent former teachers

QUESTION: Since you left teaching, how many different jobs have you had, including your current job?



FORMER TEACHERS IN AMERICA

CHAPTER 6:

Possible Steps to Retain Good Teachers

When current teachers and former teachers canvass the large variety of policy changes and reforms that have been suggested to help retain good teachers, they reach remarkable agreement about which proposed solutions will help the most. Those top-rated solutions constitute a virtual mandate to policymakers concerning the steps to be achieved.

Over 8 in 10 of both former (Table 20) and current (Table 21) teachers think these steps or changes would help a lot: providing a decent salary, providing more respect for teachers in today's society, having students who are more strongly motivated to learn, and providing increased financial support for the school system.

It should be noted that *all* twelve steps receive majority endorsement from both current teachers and former teachers. No proposed step receives from either group less than 55% thinking it would "help a lot" to keep good people in teaching. Some of the steps are more popular than others, and some may be more realistic or feasible than others, and they also vary in their cost implications. But *all* twelve of them would be well-received by present and former teachers. There are no serious disagreements on the agenda for reform that can be identified here.

Table 22 shows ratings of the twelve possible steps by "likely leavers" – those current teachers who say they are likely to leave teaching for a new occupation in the next five years. Their ratings are very similar; for instance, their top four priorities are identical to those of all current teachers and all former teachers. This offers policymakers valuable information about the steps that are likely to prove effective with the very teachers who may be the next out the door unless something is done.

OBSERVATION: Again, the views of former teachers offer an important independent *confirmation* of the message that we receive from current teachers (including the "likely leavers"). The fact that the groups agree on the steps that need to be taken shows that such measures are endorsed by virtually all who are familiar with the situation, and not simply by those who might stand to gain personally from any improved salary and working conditions for teachers. To policymakers such agreement represents a virtual mandate about how to effect meaningful change that will have genuine appeal to teachers.

Table 20

Former Teachers Rate Possible Steps to Retain Good Teachers

Base: Recent former teachers

QUESTION: I will now read some steps that might be taken to encourage good teachers to *remain* in teaching instead of leaving the profession. For each, please tell me whether you think it would help a lot, help a little, or would not help at all in *keeping* good people in teaching.

Base: 500		Help a Lot	Help a Little	Would Not Help at All	Not Sure
Providing a decent salary	%	88	11	1	—
Providing more respect for teachers in today's society	%	83	15	1	1
Having students who are more strongly motivated to learn	%	78	19	2	1
Providing increased financial support for the school system	%	77	20	3	*
Reducing the time teachers need to spend on discipline	%	67	28	6	*
Providing smaller class size	%	65	32	2	1
Reducing any unnecessary rules and requirements that waste teachers' time	%	65	32	3	*
Having more parent involvement with the schools	%	62	30	7	*
Providing a closer match between student needs and teacher capabilities	%	55	38	7	1
Reducing the time teachers need to spend on administrative tasks	%	53	39	7	*
Providing better tools and supplies teachers need to do their job	%	52	42	5	1
Providing more independence to organize classes the way teachers think they should be	%	50	43	6	1

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 21

Current Teachers Rate Possible Steps to Retain Good Teachers

Base: Current teachers

QUESTION: I will now read some steps that might be taken to encourage good teachers to *remain* in teaching instead of leaving the profession. For each, please tell me whether you think it would help a lot, help a little, or would not help at all in *keeping* good people in teaching.

		Help a Lot	Help a Little	Would Not Help at All	Not Sure
Base: 1646					
Providing a decent salary	%	94	6	*	*
Providing more respect for teachers in today's society	%	90	9	1	*
Having students who are more strongly motivated to learn	%	85	13	1	1
Providing increased financial support for the school system	%	84	15	1	*
Providing smaller class size	%	79	20	1	*
Reducing any unnecessary rules and requirements that waste teachers' time	%	72	25	2	*
Providing better tools and supplies teachers need to do their job	%	69	29	2	*
Reducing the time teachers need to spend on discipline	%	69	27	3	*
Reducing the time teachers need to spend on administrative tasks	%	68	30	2	*
Providing more independence to organize classes the way teachers think they should be	%	59	38	2	*
Having more parent involvement with the schools	%	56	39	5	*
Providing a closer match between student needs and teacher capabilities	%	55	39	5	1

*Less than 0.5%

Table 22

"Likely Leavers" Rate Possible Steps to Retain Good Teachers

Base: Current teachers who say they are likely to leave teaching for some new occupation in the next five years

QUESTION: I will now read some steps that might be taken to encourage good teachers to *remain* in teaching instead of leaving the profession. For each, please tell me whether you think it would help a lot, help a little, or would not help at all in *keeping* good people in teaching.

		Help a Lot	Help a Little	Would Not Help at All	Not Sure
Base: 525					
Providing a decent salary	%	95	5	*	*
Providing more respect for teachers in today's society	%	89	10	1	*
Having students who are more strongly motivated to learn	%	84	14	2	1
Providing increased financial support for the school system	%	83	16	1	*
Providing smaller class size	%	80	18	2	*
Reducing the time teachers need to spend on discipline	%	75	23	2	*
Reducing the time teachers need to spend on administrative tasks	%	73	25	1	*
Reducing any unnecessary rules and requirements that waste teachers' time	%	70	28	2	*
Providing better tools and supplies teachers need to do their job	%	67	30	3	—
Providing more independence to organize classes the way teachers think they should be	%	59	32	8	*
Having more parent involvement with the schools	%	57	39	3	*
Providing a closer match between student needs and teacher capabilities	%	56	37	6	1

*Less than 0.5%

CHAPTER 7:

Attracting Good People Into Teaching

Former teachers and current teachers are in solid agreement about those steps which would help the most to attract people into the teaching profession (Tables 25 and 26). Four proposals are judged by more than half of *both* groups as likely to "help a lot." Making starting salaries more competitive is the most popular measure: 8 in 10 of both groups favor providing compensation to beginning teachers comparable to other professionals required to have similar training. Others include reducing the amount of time teachers spend on non-teaching duties, paying teachers partly according to their qualifications, and providing advanced study sabbaticals.

Current teachers endorse a fifth proposal by 50%, providing time for teachers to discuss their needs and problems with other teachers. However, former teachers are much less optimistic about the effect of this step, with only 34% thinking it would help a lot.

Current teachers and former teachers are also in agreement about which steps would be the least helpful. Allowing school districts to hire talented people who are not certified teachers ranks last with both groups.

Currently controversial proposals such as "merit pay" and career ladders seem to be somewhat more popular with former teachers than they are with current teachers. Perhaps former teachers are more familiar with the concept of differentiated staffing embodied in such policies in their new occupations.

Table 25 presents the ratings of the eleven steps by "likely leavers" -- those current teachers who say they are likely to leave for a new occupation in the next five years. They rate the steps in an order identical to all current teachers, and their top four priorities are the same as those of former teachers. It is particularly useful for policymakers to know that the most popular steps overall also have strong appeal to those who may be the next out the door unless something is done to change their minds.

OBSERVATION: As we first noted in *The American Teacher 1985*, there is a pattern that emerges which links together attitudes about these and the other reforms considered in this study. Current teachers and former teachers support particularly strongly those reforms that would serve to increase the *professionalism* of teaching. And they tend to disapprove of proposals that might be construed as diminishing or denigrating the professionalism of teachers. This remains the key to understanding teachers' perspectives on most proposals for reform. And it offers powerful information to educational policymakers about the kind of changes that will appeal to the constituencies they need to reach.

Table 23

Former Teachers Rate Possible Steps to Attract Good Teachers

Base: Recent former teachers

QUESTION: I will now mention some reforms that might be adopted to attract good people into teaching. For each please tell me whether you think that reform would help a lot, help a little, or would not help at all to attract good teachers.

	Help a Lot	Help a Little	Would Not Help at All	Not Sure
Base: 400				
Steps Thought to "Help a Lot" by Half or More				
Providing compensation to beginning teachers comparable to other professions that require similar training	% 85	13	2	*
Reducing the amount of time teachers spend in non-teaching duties	% 62	33	5	—
Paying teachers partly according to their *qualifications*, such as education, training, and experience	% 60	36	4	*
Providing advanced study sabbaticals for teachers to enhance their professional development	% 56	38	6	*
Steps Thought to "Help a Lot" by Fewer Than Half				
Paying teachers partly according to the *specific jobs* they hold, such as apprentice teacher or master teacher	% 48	40	12	*
Establishing minimum national standards for certifying all new teachers	% 40	41	19	*
Requiring new teachers before certification to pass rigorous examinations comparable to other licensed professionals	% 40	38	21	1
Paying teachers partly according to their *performance on evaluation or test*, sometimes called "merit pay"	% 37	33	29	1
Providing time for teachers to discuss their needs and problems with other teachers	% 34	52	14	—
Offering teachers a 12-month contract with pay and duties for the full year	% 34	35	31	1
Allowing school districts to hire talented people who are not certified teachers	% 21	40	38	*

*Less than 0.5%

Table 24

Current Teachers Rate Possible Steps to Attract Good Teachers

Base: Current teachers

QUESTION: I will now mention some reforms that might be adopted to attract good people into teaching. For each please tell me whether you think that that reform would help a lot, help a little, or would not help at all to attract good teachers.

	Help a Lot	Help a Little	Would Not Help at All	Not Sure
Base: 1646				
Steps Thought to "Help a Lot" by Half or More				
Providing compensation to beginning teachers comparable to other professions that require similar training	79	19	1	1
Reducing the amount of time teachers spend in non-teaching duties	74	25	3	*
Paying teachers partly according to their qualifications, such as education, training, and experience	65	31	4	1
Providing advanced study sabbaticals for teachers to enhance their professional development	58	39	2	*
Providing time for teachers to discuss their needs and problems with other teachers	50	43	7	*
Steps Thought to "Help a Lot" by Fewer Than Half				
Establishing minimum national standards for certifying all new teachers	35	44	21	1
Requiring new teachers before certification to pass rigorous examinations comparable to other licensed professionals	34	44	21	1
Paying teachers partly according to the *specific jobs* they hold, such as apprentice teacher or master teacher	34	45	19	2
Offering teachers a 12-month contract with pay and duties for the full year	24	38	36	1
Paying teachers partly according to their performance on evaluations or tests, sometimes called "merit pay"	13	36	50	1
Allowing school districts to hire talented people who are not certified teachers	12	43	43	2

*Less than 0.5%

Table 25

"Likely Leavers" Rate Possible Steps to Attract Good Teachers

Base: Current teachers who say they are likely to leave teaching for some new occupation in the next five years

QUESTION: I will now mention some reforms that might be adopted to attract good people into teaching. For each please tell me whether you think that that reform would help a lot, help a little, or would not help at all to attract good teachers.

	Help a Lot	Help a Little	Would Not Help at All	Not Sure
Base: 525				
Steps Thought to "Help a Lot" by Half or More:				
Providing compensation to beginning teachers comparable to other professions that require similar training	%			
Reducing the amount of time teachers spend in non-teaching duties	%			
Paying teachers partly according to their *qualifications*, such as education, training, and experience	%			
Providing advanced study sabbaticals for teachers to enhance their professional development	%			
Providing time for teachers to discuss their needs and problems with other teachers	%			
Steps Thought to "Help a Lot" by Fewer Than Half:				
Establishing minimum national standards for certifying all new teachers	%			
Requiring new teachers before certification to pass rigorous examinations comparable to other licensed professionals	%			
Paying teachers partly according to the *specific jobs* they hold, such as apprentice teacher or master teacher	%			
Offering teachers a 12-month contract with pay and duties for the full year	%			
Paying teachers partly according to their *performance on evaluations or tests*, sometimes called "merit pay"	%			
Allowing school districts to hire talented people who are not certified teachers	%			

*Less than 0.5%

CHAPTER 8:

Preparing the Next Generation of Teachers

Former teachers (Table 26) and current teachers (Table 27) are in agreement about the steps they think will help most to produce good teachers in the future. More than 50% of both groups think these steps will help a lot: upgrading accreditation standards for teacher training programs at college; upgrading admission standards for students entering teacher training programs; and requiring new teachers to serve a supervised apprenticeship or internship before being certified. In addition, 70% of current teachers and 48% of former teachers think that placing more emphasis during teacher training on teaching skills, rather than subject skills, will help a lot.

Current teachers and former teachers are also in agreement about the steps that they think will prove least helpful. Fewer than 10% of each group give high marks to requiring all teachers to earn a bachelor's degree in an academic subject plus a master's in education, or to placing more emphasis on subject skills (rather than teaching skills) during teacher training. Many teachers seem to feel that training in teaching skills is particularly important to their professionalism, more so for instance than is training in academic subject skills.

OBSERVATION — In the years ahead policymakers will need to attract greater numbers of college students into the profession's training programs. Those teacher training programs will also need to be reformed to assure that they admit excellent students in the first place, give them rigorous training, and turn out stronger professionals in the future. The evidence in this survey offers abundant actionable insights for policymakers. We now know what measures will prove effective in attracting and retaining good teachers. The question is whether society can and will act in time to assure sufficient numbers of qualified professionals in the classrooms of the future.

Table 26

Former Teachers Rate Possible Steps to Produce Good Teachers

Base: Recent former teachers

QUESTION: I will now mention some reforms that might be adopted to produce high quality teachers in the future. For each please tell me whether you think that that reform would help a lot, help a little, or would not help at all to produce high quality teachers.

Base: 500	Help a Lot	Help a Little	Would Not Help at All	Not Sure
Steps Thought to "Help a Lot" by Half or More				
Upgrading *accreditation standards* for teacher training programs at college %	66	28	6	1
Upgrading *admission standards* for students entering teacher training programs at college %	60	31	8	*
Requiring new teachers to serve a supervised apprenticeship or internship before being certified %	57	32	10	1
Steps Thought to "Help a Lot" by Fewer Than Half				
Placing more emphasis on *teaching* skills, rather than subject skills during teacher training %	48	39	12	1
Enabling local school officials to recruit new teachers more aggressively at colleges %	41	43	15	1
Making the school district responsible for training new teachers after they finish their formal education %	35	46	23	1
Requiring all teachers to earn a bachelor's degree in an academic subject *plus* a master's degree in education %	25	44	31	1
Placing more emphasis on *subject* skills, rather than teaching skills during teacher training %	22	45	33	1

*Less than 0.5%

Table 27

Current Teachers Rate Possible Steps to Produce Good Teachers

Base: Current teachers

QUESTION: I will now mention some reforms that might be adopted to produce high quality teachers in the future. For each please tell me whether you think that that reform would help a lot, help a little, or would not help at all to produce high quality teachers.

		Help a Lot	Help a Little	Would Not Help at All	Not Sure
Base: 1846					
Steps Thought to "Help a Lot" by Half or More:					
Upgrading *accreditation standards* for teacher training programs at college	%	72	25	3	1
Upgrading *admission standards* for students entering teacher training programs at college	%	65	29	6	*
Requiring new teachers to serve a supervised apprenticeship or internship before being certified	%	62	30	8	*
Placing more emphasis on *teaching skills*, rather than subject skills during teacher training	%	50	36	12	1
Steps Thought to "Help a Lot" by Fewer Than Half					
Enabling local school officials to recruit new teachers more aggressively at college	%	36	47	15	1
Making the school district responsible for training new teachers after they finish their formal education	%	36	40	23	1
Placing more emphasis on *subject skills*, rather than teaching skills during teacher training	%	29	45	25	1
Requiring all teachers to earn a bachelor's degree in an academic subject *plus* a master's degree in education	%	28	41	30	*

*Less than 0.5%.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The 1985 Metropolitan Life Survey was conducted by Louis Harris and Associates for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company from April 25 through June 8, 1985. A total of 1,846 telephone interviews were conducted with *current* public school teachers in grades K–12 throughout all fifty states of the U.S. and the District of Columbia. In addition 500 more telephone interviews were conducted with *former* teachers who have left teaching within the past five years to go into some different occupation.

Sample Selection of Current Teachers

From a list of 1.2 million teachers (compiled by Market Data Retrieval of Westport, Connecticut) Louis Harris and Associates selected a nationwide random sample of current teachers. Sample sizes for completed interviews were set for each state, based on the proportion of elementary and secondary school classroom teachers in each state. The state sample sizes were set in line with statistics published by the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics.

Sample Selection of Former Teachers

Since there are no adequate lists of *former* teachers available, the names of former teachers were obtained by *referral* from other respondents. Thirty-one percent of the former teachers were nominated by this year's current teachers; 41% were nominated by the current teachers in last year's survey whom we called back for this purpose; 8% were nominated by a national sample of school principals whom we also contacted; and the rest were nominated by their fellow former teachers as the interviewing process went forward. Because the nominators were representative groups located through random methods, we have confidence that the nominees are also a broadly representative sample.

Here is the language that was used in soliciting names and phone numbers of former teachers. This request for nominations came at the end of the current teachers' questionnaire:

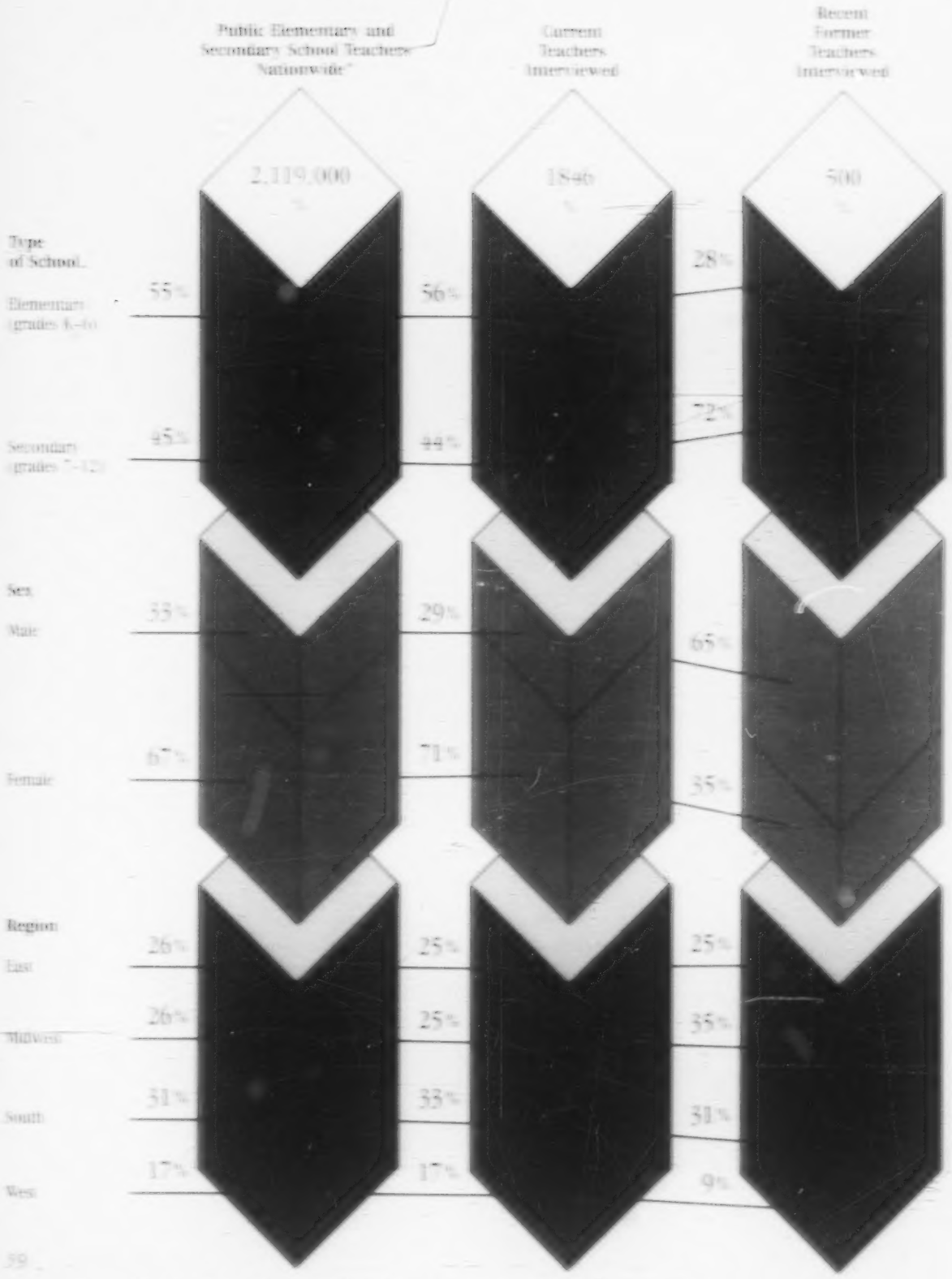
> In addition to interviewing current teachers, we are also interested in interviewing *former* teachers who have left teaching during the past five years and are currently working at some *other* occupation. Do you know anyone like that whose name and phone number you could give us. If you wish, we will not mention your name.

A problem that can potentially occur using a referral method is that those former teachers who have moved away from their old area, or broken off contact with their old colleagues, might be somewhat less likely to be nominated and located. That is one reason why we specified the time frame as just the past five years, so that knowledge of a former teacher's whereabouts would be relatively fresh and accurate.

Table A-1 shows the distribution of the respondents interviewed by type of school, by sex, and by region. As the table demonstrates, figures for current teachers closely parallel the statistics for teachers nationwide developed by the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics. Figures for former teachers show some interesting differences which reflect the fact that some categories of teachers are more likely to leave the profession than others.

Table A-1

Sample Distribution



*Based on figures developed by the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, 1984.

Interviewing Procedures

Each selected current teacher was contacted at his or her school by a representative of Louis Harris and Associates and requested to participate in the survey. When we could not reach a teacher directly, we left a message (including a toll-free number) to allow a return call. Before being asked to complete the actual interview, each current teacher was screened to ensure that he or she teaches in an elementary- or secondary-level public school and teaches at least part-time in the classroom. Once the respondent passed the screen, an appointment was made to telephone at a convenient time and place to complete the interview.

Former teachers were contacted at home. When the person who referred us was uncertain of the home telephone number, we consulted telephone books and directory assistance, sometimes in several geographical areas in order to pursue as completely as possible every name we received. Once contacted, each former teacher was screened to ensure that he or she had once taught but left within the past five years to go into some other occupation.

Questionnaire Development

Five drafts of the questionnaires were pretested among a sample of 15 current and former teachers. The lessons learned during this testing process provided important refinements to the survey questionnaire.

Many individuals contributed their comments to the survey questionnaire, and Louis Harris and Associates is extremely grateful for those contributions. However, final responsibility for the questionnaire rests with Louis Harris and Associates.

Processing of the Data

All completed questionnaires were edited, coded, keypunched, and verified. The data were tabulated, checked for internal consistency, and processed by computer. The output of this process is a series of computer tables showing the results for each survey question, both by the total number of respondents interviewed and by important subgroupings.

Weighting of the Data

Oversamples of current teachers were conducted in New York and California sufficient to achieve sample sizes of 500 in each of those two states. Results for New York and California will be issued in separate reports. For purposes of nationwide analyses in the present report, current teachers in New York and California have been weighted to their proper proportion of all United States teachers. No weighting of former teachers was needed because there was no oversample involved.

Sample Disposition and Response Rates

The sample disposition for this survey is shown in Table A-2. A total of 4,822 contacts were made to yield 1,846 completed interviews with current teachers. In the case of former teachers, the 1,427 referrals we received yielded 500 completed interviews with former teachers.

Of all the current teachers who were contacted at their schools or for whom a message was left, 47% were willing to talk to a Louis Harris and Associates interviewer. Although there are a number of different methods by which response rates can be calculated, we arrived at this figure by comparing the number of teachers that we were able to reach with the complete list of current teachers at their schools. For former teachers, we were able to locate and reach 83% of all the referrals given to us. We call these the contact success rates.

Of the current teachers who were contacted by Louis Harris and Associates and who passed the screen, 89% completed an interview. The counterpart figure for former teachers is 76%. We call these the interview completion rates and we calculate them by dividing the number of completed interviews by the sums of (1) the number of completed interviews, (2) the number of interview refusals, (3) the number of interviews terminated within the course of the interview, (4) the number of respondents who were left to call back at the time the survey was completed, and (5) the number who were unavailable for the duration of the field period.

With reference to Table A-2, the contact success rate and the interview completion rate have been calculated according to the following formulas:

		Recent Former Teachers	Current Teachers
Contact Success Rate	$= \frac{A - E - F - H - I - J - K}{A - E - F - G - H - I - J - K - L}$	83%	47%
Interview Completion Rate	$= \frac{A}{A - E - H - J - K}$	76%	89%

The disposition of all attempted contacts is provided in Table A-2 so that interested individuals may make their own calculations of response rate.

Table A-2
SAMPLE DISPOSITION

	Referrals of Recent Former Teachers	List of Current Teachers
A. Completed interview	580	1,846
B. Nonworking number, wrong number, or new number	134	81
C. No longer at school, retired, deceased, on leave	—	241
D. No answer or busy (after three callbacks)	63	45
E. Refused interview	52	28
F. Noneligible respondent (screened out)	363	22
G. Never returned call after message left at school	—	2,570
H. To call back (study completed before callback was needed)	95	145
I. Language barrier	0	0
J. Terminated within interview	6	0
K. Not available during duration of field period	25	64
L. Referral information insufficient, unlocatable	309	—
Total number of contacts	1,627	4,822

Reliability of Survey Percentages

It is important to bear in mind that the results from any sample survey are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of this variation is measurable and is affected both by the number of interviews involved and by the level of the percentages expressed in the results.

Table A-1 shows the possible sample variation that applies to percentage results for this survey. The chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than the indicated number of percentage points from the result that would have been obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

For example, if the response for a sample size of 1,000 is 50%, there is 95 cases out of 100 the response in the total population would be between 47% and 53%. Note that survey results based on subgroups of small size can be subject to large sampling error.

Table A-3

Approximate Sampling Tolerances (at 95% Confidence) to Use in Evaluating Percentage Results Appearing in This Report

NUMBER OF PEOPLE ASKED QUESTION ON WHICH SURVEY RESULT IS BASED	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 10% OR 90%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 20% OR 80%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 30% OR 70%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 40% OR 60%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 50%
2,000	1	2	2	2	2
1,500	2	2	2	3	3
1,000	2	2	3	3	3
900	2	3	3	3	3
800	2	3	3	3	3
700	2	3	3	4	4
600	2	3	4	4	4
500	3	4	4	4	4
400	3	4	4	5	5
300	3	5	5	6	6
200	4	6	6	–	–
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14

Sampling tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results from two different samples or from different parts of a sample (subgroup analysis). Table A-4 shows the percentage difference that must be obtained before a difference can be considered statistically significant. These figures, too, represent the 95% confidence level.

For example, suppose one group of 1,000 has a response of 34% "yes" to a question, and an independent group of 500 has a response of 28% "yes" to the same question, for a difference of 6 percentage points. According to the table, this difference is subject to a potential sampling error of 5 percentage points. Since the observed difference is greater than the sampling error, the observed difference is significant.

These errors account for sampling error only. Survey research is also susceptible to other errors, such as in data handling and in interviewer recording. The procedures followed by Louis Harris and Associates, however, keep errors of these kinds to a minimum.

Table A-4

Approximate Sampling Tolerances (at 95% Confidence) to Use in Evaluating Differences Between Two Percentage Results Appearing in This Report

APPROXIMATE SAMPLE SIZE OF TWO GROUPS BEING COMPARED	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT OR NEAR 10% OR 90%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT OR NEAR 20% OR 80%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT OR NEAR 30% OR 70%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT OR NEAR 40% OR 60%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 50%
2,000 vs. 2,000	2	2	3	3	3
1,000	2	3	4	4	4
800	3	3	4	4	4
600	3	4	4	5	5
500	4	5	6	6	6
400	4	6	–	–	–
300	6	8	9	10	10
200	9	11	13	14	14
1,000 vs. 1,000	3	4	4	4	4
800	3	4	4	5	5
600	3	4	5	5	5
500	4	5	6	6	6
400	5	6	–	–	8
300	6	8	9	10	10
200	9	11	13	14	14
800 vs. 800	3	4	4	5	5
600	3	4	5	5	6
500	4	5	6	–	–
400	5	6	–	8	8
300	6	8	10	10	10
200	9	11	13	14	14
600 vs. 600	4	4	6	6	6
500	4	6	–	–	–
400	6	–	8	8	8
300	–	9	10	11	11
200	8	12	13	14	15
500 vs. 500	5	6	–	8	8
400	5	–	8	9	9
300	–	9	10	11	11
200	9	12	14	15	15
400 vs. 400	6	8	9	10	10
300	–	10	11	12	12
200	9	12	14	15	15
300 vs. 300	8	11	13	14	14
200	10	14	16	17	17
200 vs. 200	12	16	18	19	20

THE QUESTIONNAIRE WITH MARGINAL FREQUENCIES

LOUIS HARRIS AND ASSOCIATES, Inc.
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10111

Study No. 854002 (Former Teachers)

April 1985 Sample Point No.:

Interviewer: Date:

Area Code: Telephone No.

Hello, I'm from Louis Harris and Associates, the national opinion polling and research firm located in New York. We are conducting a national survey among current teachers and among former teachers who have left teaching to go into a different occupation. We would like to ask you a few questions about the American educational system.

From Observation: Respondent sex:

Male	(9) 65 -1
Female	35 -2
	100%

S1. Are you currently a teacher, or are you a former teacher who is now working at a different occupation?

Current teacher	(20) 0 -1 (SCREEN OUT)
Former teacher	100 -2 (ASK Q. 1)
Still in education but not a classroom teacher in public schools (VOL.)	0 -3
Retired	0 -4
Unemployed or not working	0 -5
Not sure	0 -6

RUSH Number Tracking:

Fieldwork Dates: April 25-June 6, 1985

Sample Size: 500

1. How many years has it been since you left teaching?

[illegible]

2. In your last teaching job did you teach in an elementary school, a junior high school, or a high school? MULTIPLE RECORD

[illegible]

3. Compared to what you expected before you went into teaching, did you find the [READ EACH ITEM] to be better than you expected, about the same as you expected, or worse than you expected?

ROTATE—START AT "1"	Better Than Expected	About Same as Expected	Worse Than Expected	No Opin
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

4. All in all, how satisfied would you say you were with teaching as a career—very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

Very satisfied	(57)	19	1
Somewhat satisfied		29	2
Somewhat dissatisfied		34	3
Very dissatisfied		18	4
Not sure		*	5

5. Did you go into teaching directly after your own education, or did you do something else for awhile?

Went directly into teaching	(58)	80	1
Did something else		20	2
Not sure		*	3

6. When you took your first teaching job, did you have any interesting job options in other occupations at that time, or not?

Had other job options	(59)	52	1
Did not have		48	2
Not sure		*	3

Q. I will now read some steps that might be taken to encourage good teachers to *remain* in teaching instead of leaving the profession. For each, please tell me whether you think it would help a lot, help a little, or would not help at all in *keeping* good people in teaching. READ EACH STATEMENT.

ROTATE—START AT "A"	Help a lot		Help a little		Would not help at all		Not sure	
a. Providing a decent salary	40	88	11	2	1	5	0	4
b. Providing more independence to organize classes the way teachers think they should be	41	50	45	2	0	5	1	4
c. Providing better tools and supplies teachers need to do their job	42	52	42	2	1	5	1	4
d. Having students who are more strongly motivated to learn	43	78	19	2	2	5	1	4
e. Providing more respect for teachers in today's society	44	83	15	2	1	5	1	4
f. Reducing the time teachers need to spend on administrative tasks	45	55	40	2	*	5	*	4
g. Reducing the time teachers need to spend on discipline	46	67	28	2	0	5	*	4
h. Reducing any unnecessary rules and requirements that waste teachers' time	47	65	32	2	1	5	*	4
i. Providing a closer match between student needs and teacher capabilities	48	55	38	2	*	5	1	4
j. Providing smaller class size	49	65	32	2	2	5	1	4
k. Having more parent involvement with the schools	50	62	34	2	*	5	*	4
l. Providing increased financial support for the school system	51	**	29	2	1	5	*	4

8. I will now mention some reforms that might be adopted to attract good people into teaching. For each please tell me whether you think that reform would help a lot, help a little, or would not help at all to attract good teachers.

ROTATE—START AT "C"	Help a Lot		Help a Little		Would Not Help at All		Not Sure	
a. Establishing minimum national standards for entrance to all new teachers	(52)	40	-1	41	-2	10	-3	*	-4
b. Requiring new teachers before certification to pass rigorous examinations comparable to other licensed professionals	(53)	40	-1	38	-2	21	-3	1	-4
c. Providing compensation to beginning teachers comparable to other professions that require similar training	(54)	85	-1	13	-2	2	-3	*	-4
d. Paying teachers partly according to their performance on evaluations or test, sometimes called "merit" pay	(55)	57	-1	33	-2	9	-3	1	-4
e. Paying teachers partly according to the specific jobs they hold, such as apprentice teacher or master teacher	(56)	48	-1	40	-2	12	-3	*	-4
f. Paying teachers partly according to their qualifications, such as education, training, and experience	(57)	80	-1	16	-2	4	-3	*	-4
g. Reducing the amount of time teachers spend on non-teaching duties	(58)	62	-1	31	-2	6	-3	1	-4
h. Providing time for teachers to discuss their work and problems with other teachers	(59)	54	-1	32	-2	14	-3	1	-4
i. Offering teachers a 12 month contract with pay and duties for the full year	(60)	54	-1	35	-2	10	-3	1	-4
j. Providing advanced study sabbaticals for teachers to enhance their professional development	(61)	56	-1	38	-2	6	-3	*	-4
k. Allowing school districts to hire talented people who are not certified teachers	(62)	21	-1	40	-2	38	-3	*	-4

9. I will now mention some reforms that might be adopted to produce high quality teachers in the future. For each please tell me whether you think that that reform would help a lot, help a little, or would not help at all to produce high quality teachers.

ROTATE—START AT "1"

	Help a Lot	Help a Little	Would Not Help at All	Not Sure
1. Upgrading accreditation standards for teacher training programs in college	(1/56) 1	2	3	4
2. Upgrading admission standards for teacher training programs in college	(1/57) 1	2	3	4
3. Placing more emphasis on content skills, rather than teaching skills during teacher training	(1/58) 1	2	3	4
4. Placing more emphasis on teaching skills, rather than content skills during teacher training	(1/59) 1	2	3	4
5. Requiring all teachers to earn a bachelor's degree in an academic subject plus a Masters degree in education	(1/60) 1	2	3	4
6. Expecting local school officials to recruit new teachers from universities or colleges	(1/61) 1	2	3	4
7. Making the school district responsible for training new teachers after they finish their formal education	(1/62) 1	2	3	4
8. Requiring new teachers to serve a supervised apprenticeship or internship before being certified	(1/63) 1	2	3	4

10. What were the main things that *caused you to leave* teaching? Anything else?

[illegible]

11. What would it take to get you to *return to* teaching? Anything else?

[illegible]

12. How likely is it that you might return to teaching sometime within the next five years—very likely, fairly likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

[illegible]

13. Did you miss teaching a great deal, somewhat, a little, or not at all?

[illegible]

14. What occupation are you currently in?

ASK FOR JOB TITLE AND MAIN DUTIES—DESCRIBE IN DETAIL.

23% executive managerial; 20% professional specialties; 5% technical (10-11)
47% sales; 5% administrative support; 0% other (service, farm, craft, laborer)

15. In your new occupation do you use some of the skills you used in teaching, or does your new occupation require different skills?

Use some skills from teaching	(12)	77	-1
Use different skills		23	-2
Not sure		0	-3

16. Did you need any new education or additional training to qualify yourself for your new occupation, or not?

Needed new training or education	(13)	54	-1
Did not need new training or education		46	-2
Not sure		0	-3

17. We'd like you to rate some of the aspects of teaching *compared* to (OCCUPATION MENTIONED IN Q.14). Is the (READ EACH ITEM) better in teaching or better in OCCUPATION MENTIONED IN Q.14?

ROTATE—START AT "a"	Better in Teaching		Better in Current Occupation		Same; No Difference (Vol.)		Not Sure	
( ) a. Salary	(14)	14	79	-2	6	-5	1	-4
( ) b. Intellectual challenge	(15)	26	56	-2	17	-5	*	-4
( ) c. Personal satisfaction	(16)	25	58	-2	15	-5	1	-4
( ) d. Equipment you have to work with	(17)	8	75	-2	15	-5	3	-4
( ) e. Professional prestige	(18)	13	75	-2	12	-5	1	-4
( ) f. Caliber of the colleagues you work with	(19)	51	42	-2	25	-5	2	-4
( ) g. Job security	(20)	69	35	-2	16	-5	*	-4
( ) h. Your control over what you work	(21)	15	75	-2	10	-5	*	-4
( ) i. Retirement benefits	(22)	39	49	-2	11	-5	1	-4
( ) j. Health insurance benefits	(23)	40	40	-2	19	-5	1	-4
( ) k. Vacation benefits	(24)	50	35	-2	6	-5	1	-4
( ) l. Total number of hours worked each week	(25)	38	42	-2	18	-5	2	-4

18. All in all how satisfied would you say you are with (OCCUPATION MENTIONED IN Q.14) as a career—very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

Very satisfied	(26)	64 -1
Somewhat satisfied		32 -2
Somewhat dissatisfied		4 -3
Very dissatisfied		2 -4
Not sure		* -5

19. Since you left teaching, how many different jobs have you had, including your current job?

(27-28)		2	= 16
		3	= 5
Not sure	(29) -1	4	= 1
		5 or +	= *
			100 %

TO BE ASKED OF EVERYONE

F1a. These last few questions are for background purposes only. In an average week in your current job how many hours do you spend, in total, on job-related responsibilities—including all responsibilities at work, any responsibilities outside the workplace, and any work you do at home?

____ hours (50-51)

Mean = 50 hours
Median = 50 hours

Not sure [52] -1

F1b. Of the total hours you spent in an average week on job-related responsibilities, how many hours would you say are on paperwork, administration, and other tasks not directly related to your main duties?

____ hours (53-54)

Mean hours = 10 hours
Median = 6 hours

Not sure [55] -1

Mean = 21%)

F2a. Almost all people have some stress in their lives, but some have a great deal of stress. In your current job, how often do you feel under *great* stress—almost every day, several days a week, once or twice a week, less often than once a week, or never?

Almost every day	[56] 10	-1
Several days a week	12	-2
Once or twice a week	40	-3
Less often than once a week	15	-4
Never	*	-5
Not _____	*	-6

F2b. And when you worked as a teacher, how often did you feel under *great* stress—almost every day, several days a week, once or twice a week, less often than once a week, or never?

Almost every day	[57] 19	-1
Several days a week	18	-2
Once or twice a week	21	-3
Less often than once a week	19	-4
Never	4	-5
Not sure	0	-6

F3. Regardless of the number of schools you've taught in, for about how many years, in total, did you work as a teacher?

F4. Did you ever receive any award, citation, or special recognition for your teaching?

F5. Did you ever serve in a position, or were you ever asked to serve in a position, of supervising other teachers?

F6. Were you a member of a teachers' union or association such as the AFT or NEA?

F7. For purposes of receiving state school aid, was your last school district considered to be of above average wealth, average wealth, or below average wealth?

F8. Is the area where your last school was located considered inner city, urban, suburban, small town, or rural?

F9. And what state was that in?

(46-47)

East	25%
Midwest	19
South	31
West	9

F10. What was the last grade or level of school that you yourself completed?
READ LIST IF NECESSARY

Less than high school graduate	(48)	0	-1
High school graduate		0	-2
Some college		*	-3
Two-year college graduate		0	-4
Four-year college graduate		14	-5
Some graduate credits		32	-6
Master's completed		31	-7
Credits beyond master's		21	-8
Ph.D. completed		2	-9

F11a. Was your undergraduate college degree in education, or not?

Yes, education	(49)	*	-1
Yes, not education		26	-2
Not sure		*	-3

F11b. Was your college subject related, or not related to the occupation you went into after you left teaching?

Related	(50)	13	-1	50
Not related		13	-2	49
Not sure		*	-3	1

F12a. Was your graduate training mainly in education, or not?

Yes, mainly in education	(51)	04	-1	75
No, not mainly in education		21	-2	24
Not sure		*	-3	*

F12b. Was your graduate training related, or not related to the occupation you went into after you left teaching?

USE INSTRUCTIONS

F13. How old are you? READ LIST

F14. During the last 12 months you were a teacher, in addition to your current teaching activities, did you work at any other kind of job for pay?

F15. Was this other job during the summer only, during the school year only, or was it during both of these time periods?

F16. Was that job related, or not related to the occupation you went into after you left teaching?

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company